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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

GULF STATES STRATEGIC VISION TO FACE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROJECT

by

Fawzan A. Alfawzan

September 2015

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

James Russell
Anne Baylouny

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**GULF STATES STRATEGIC VISION TO FACE IRANIAN NUCLEAR
PROJECT**

Fawzan A. Alfawzan
Colonel, Saudi Arabian National Guard
B.S., King Khalid Military College, 1993

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
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from the

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September 2015**

Approved by: James Russell
Thesis Advisor

Anne Baylouny
Second Reader

Mohammed Hafez
Chair, Department of National Security Affairs

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ABSTRACT

The research provides facts showing Iran's capabilities in processing nuclear weapons at a high degree. Nuclear capabilities provided Iran with uranium enrichment abilities and nuclear weapons to enable the country to impose control on Gulf states.

The research also demonstrates the threats affecting Arabian Gulf states in the event of Iranian nuclear project completion at a high degree, including increased violence, the expansion of corruption and terrorism, local security threats, and the disturbance of economic security.

Furthermore, the research discusses obstacles that Arabian Gulf states may face in the event of the completion of an Iranian nuclear project at a high degree: political dialogue required to force Iran to stop continuing its nuclear project, ability to convince Iran, and a clear strategy to protect the Arabian Gulf region.

Lastly, the research considers the strategic vision and equivalent methods required in the face of an Iranian nuclear project, which include the possibility that other Arabian Gulf states also possess nuclear weapons, international assurances that Iran's nuclear project is to be used only for peaceful applications, and a stable political negotiation among the Arabian Gulf states and Iran.

The main recommendation of the research introduces the establishment of a unified nuclear power authority under the supervision of the Gulf Cooperation Council on using nuclear projects peacefully. Another recommendation is to conduct an international summit to seize weapons of mass destruction in the Arabian Gulf region in particular, and the Middle East in general. A final recommendation is for international and regional political and economic tools to prevent Iran from possessing a nuclear weapon in the region.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AGC	Arabian Gulf Countries
AICE	American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
EU	European Union
GCC	Gulf Council Countries
GFP	Global Functional Plane
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
INP	Iranian Nuclear Project
IEC	Iranian Economic Capabilities
INF	Iranian Navy Forces
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and Levant
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
ISIS	Institute for Science and International Security
MW	Megawatts
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NTI	Nuclear Threat Initiative
OICA	International Organization of Automobile Manufacturers
SR	Saudi Rial
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
USSR	Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Gulf Cooperation Council states, like the rest of the world, would benefit from a negotiated solution to the Iranian nuclear crisis, or at least a continuation of the current uneasy standoff. However, an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities or an Iranian push to produce nuclear weapons would pose excruciating risks and dilemmas for the two most economically and politically significant Gulf states

–George Perkovich¹

According to George Perkovich, vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Iran constitutes perhaps the greatest threat to the stability of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. As noted by Perkovich, the most important requirement in the Gulf states is to maintain national security. The Iranian threat is the same for all Gulf states, suggesting that it is essential for GCC states, as a unified whole, to confront the Iranian nuclear program (INP). Based on this objective, this thesis first seeks to focus on peaceful political, economic, and strategic pressures that the Gulf states can bring to bear on Iran to halt its nuclear program. Second, this thesis emphasizes the establishment of the Gulf nuclear program to restore the strategic balance in the region and to protect GCC states, forestall Iran's ambitions, and discourage expansionist interests to control the region.

Jameel Althyabi notes that Gulf states' fears of an Iranian program increased when Iran and the United Nations (UN) Security Council reached a deal on November 24, 2013, regarding the continuing INP.² Although the UN Security Council claimed that the INP is for peaceful purposes, it remains very difficult to predict its outcomes or Iran's compliance with the agreement. Due to the uncertainty of Iran's intentions in its nuclear program, the Gulf states must exert pressure on Iran to maintain its stated peaceful intentions.

¹ Perkovich George, Brian Radzinsky, and Tandler Jaclyn, "The Iranian Nuclear Challenge and the GCC," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, May 31, 2012, <http://carnegieendowment.org>.

² Jameel Althyabi, *Iran and Crab dancing (Īrān wa-raqṣat al-saraṭān)* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Obeikan Bookstore, 2011), 102.

It becomes clear to the Gulf states that the possession of nuclear weapons may very well encourage Iran to exercise hegemony and domination over its neighboring countries. As noted by one observer in the Gulf, Iranian nuclear weapon danger was not unclear to the leaders of GCC States, and this is why they declared that their countries are working for preparing a joint study to build up a nuclear program for peaceful use during the Al-Jaber summit in Riyadh in 2007.³

Giving voice to this perspective, Abdullah Toukan and Anthony Cordesman stress that Gulf states must have a strategy to protect the region from any threats, from either Iran or elsewhere; in addition, Gulf state governments have to look for the way to set up their collective and national assets.⁴ Toukan and Cordesman believe that the Gulf states have to be responsible for military protection and any direct confrontation, no matter the cost, with Iran or any other antagonist. This attitude justifies the Gulf states to join the GCC Joint Defense Treaty and enhance cooperation among them.⁵

According to Tariq Khaitous study, all Arab regimes believe that the INP is a means of getting into the military's nuclear weapons.⁶ Therefore, they must search for a political solution to a political solution to bypass the INP. Arab regimes know that Iran has taken a major step forward in stabilizing its regional power and hence will have more leverage to intervene in Arab issues. In general, the INP could have a major influence over Gulf states' nonproliferation in the Middle East. Arab regimes are unhappy because Israel already has nuclear weapons, and the INP will make it so that each country try to own nuclear weapons. It is also possible that Arab regimes might stop their cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency IAEA.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Abdullah Toukan and Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Iranian Nuclear Challenge: GCC Security, Risk Assessment, and US Extended Deterrence* (CSIS Report No. 110202) (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic International Studies, 2011), 32, <http://csis.org/files/110202.pdf>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Tariq Khaitous, *Arab Reactions to a Nuclear-Armed Iran* (Policy Focus #94) (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East, 2009), 10–19, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/PolicyFocus94.pdf>.

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

The major research question for this thesis is as follows: What is the Gulf's strategic vision in the face of the Iranian nuclear project (INP)? From the main question of the study, the following sub-questions arise:

1. What are the threats facing the Gulf states if the INP comes to completion?
2. What are the obstacles that hinder the success of the Gulf states' efforts to confront the Iranian nuclear program?
3. What are the methods of facing the INP?

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

This study analyzes and explains the risks and means of confronting the INP. The research also shows that neither hard power nor soft solutions alone can address Iran's nuclear ambitions. A combination of hard and soft power with minimal external influence is required. Furthermore, making the citizens of the GCC states at all levels aware of the consequences of the problem and forming public opinion in the Gulf states regarding the risks of this threat, which is internationally condemned, will exert more pressure on Iran to cooperate.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

The present study focuses on giving a strategic vision in the Gulf states to face the INP through three approaches: direct confrontation, promoted by the Gulf states to the public that objects to the completion of the INP; use of soft power in the form of economic boycotts against Iran; and an indirect confrontation through a Gulf nuclear project, for peaceful purposes, as a preventive deterrent in order to create strategic balance in the region.

Trista Parsi identifies the intricate, highly cooperative interactions between Iran and other states during the reign of Shah Mohammed Rez Pahlavi.⁷ Parsi notes that the cooperation continued until the international community became disturbed after Iran

⁷ Trista Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States* (New York: Yale University Press, 2007), 1–49.

insisted on completing its nuclear project on the pretext of using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The study has come up with many results, which include the following:

- (1) Gulf states countries should endeavor to inform the United States of the dangers of Iran, its expansion ambitions, the chaotic instability that it caused in the Arabian Gulf region and its continuous endeavor to cause disorders in Arab countries through provocation, and material and moral support of Shia.⁸
- (2) The nature of Israel-Iran relations changed from the implied alliance into the declared hostility, and Israel declared its desire to destroy Iranian nuclear capabilities to prevent it from creating a balance with Israel in the region.⁹
- (3) The United States should impose sanctions on Iran to prevent it from completing its nuclear program, and give two options, either to possess the nuclear weapon or to undermine the economy, which may be associated with a revolution against the regime or a loss of authority.¹⁰
- (4) The ideal option is to continue imposing sanctions on Iran so that it becomes an economically torn state in the event that it succeeds in the possession of nuclear capabilities and the manufacture of the nuclear weapon.¹¹

Tariq Khaitous argues that a nuclear-armed Iran would significantly impact the balance of power in the Middle East, causing Arab regimes to be concerned that Iran would become the most powerful country in the region.¹² Khaitous further notes that the apprehensiveness could either lead to an arms race among Gulf states to mitigate the

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Khaitous, *Arab Reactions*, 12.

threat, or increase extra-regional cooperation with organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).¹³ Additionally, Khaitous notes that Gulf states are uncomfortable with Israel's nuclear capability, which seems to have worsened the situation.¹⁴ Nonetheless, he concludes that an effective resolution is one that comes from the Arabs and not the West. Khaitous' conclusions are in line with the proposed recommendations in this paper for the Gulf states in facing nuclear Iran.¹⁵

Elizabeth Iskander contends that the Arab Spring and re-configurations in Arab countries have made relations and outcomes more uncertain.¹⁶ Iskander concludes that the causes of protest, collectively referred to as the Arab Spring, vary from one to another. Thus, each state should be considered a separate entity, and the crisis could lead to more cooperation among the states. Iskander, however, stresses that building relations under such conditions is weak and could undermine national, regional, and international cooperation.¹⁷

Jameel Althyabi investigates Iran's possession of nuclear technology, which enabled it to manufacture the nuclear weapons and change the balance of power in the Middle East.¹⁸ Althyabi found that Iranian policies are continuing to possess the nuclear capabilities at the expense of the increased ratio of unemployment and poverty, and the decreased standard of living for the Iranian people. His findings include the following:

- (1) From the perspective of the Gulf states governments, when Iran owns nuclear weapons, it provokes disorder in Gulf states through attempts to overthrow the ruling regimes in the Gulf countries.¹⁹

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 23.

¹⁵ Ibid. 23–24.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Iskander, "Arab-Iranian Relations: Discourses of Conflict and Cooperation," *LSE International Relations*, November 2011, 2–9, <http://www.lse.ac.pdf>.

¹⁷ Ibid., 7.

¹⁸ Althyabi, *Iran and Crab Dancing*, 17–69.

¹⁹ Ibid.

- (2) Iranian policy still works in accordance with the conspiracy idea through sustaining religious and doctrinal emotion within the Gulf states to render emotions towards a condition of sectarian expansion, which entraps the Arabian region to ultimately place it under the condition of bloody war (i.e., revolution).²⁰
- (3) Iran endeavors to control Arab citizens and disseminate the Shia doctrine in a manner consistent with its agenda and interests in a manner inconsistent with the requirements of security and stability in the Gulf states region.²¹

Ray Takeyh examines the role of Iran in the new Middle East, the turning points in the American-Iranian relationships, and the way of understanding Iran.²² Takeyh's findings include the following:

- (1) The Gulf states are among Iran's most important strategic priorities; therefore, Iran endeavors to dominate them and impose its authority among them.²³
- (2) After the Islamic Revolution, Iran caused disorders and demonstrations in most of the Gulf states by making use of Shia groupings in demonstrating claim for economic and political rights.²⁴
- (3) Iran endeavored to provoke the Gulf states into discontinuing their relations with United States, but the Gulf states refused to sacrifice their relations with United States for the sake of Iran and its avidity in the region.²⁵

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ray Takeyh, *Hidden Iran: Paradox and Power in the Islamic Republic* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997), 11–58.

²³ Ibid., 14–18.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 26.

- (4) Iran succeeded in remedying its relations with neighboring Arabian Gulf states (the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain). A series of commercial, diplomatic, and security agreements have been signed between Iran the Arabian Gulf countries, which saved the Iranian economy.²⁶
- (5) Despite the implied alliance between Israel and Iran, Israel totally rejected Iran's endeavor to possess nuclear capabilities, and exerted considerable efforts to stop the INP by extending military strikes against Iranian nuclear facilities.²⁷
- (6) Iran noted that its possession of Islamic nuclear weapons is for the achievement of the strategic balance with Israel.²⁸
- (7) The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia considered the Iranian nuclear bomb to be a Persian bomb and not an Islamic one. It does not form a threat to Israel alone, but it also forms a strategic threat to the Arabian Gulf countries, which Iran endeavors to dominate, control, and to interfere with in their internal affairs.²⁹

Claudia Balzán believes that the INP is the most serious problem threatening the security of the Gulf region.³⁰ Balzán analyzed Iranian threats to the Gulf countries and its attempt to destabilize and overthrow the existing regimes and replace them with Shiite regimes. Balzán also notes the limitation of American options to prevent Iran's possession of nuclear capabilities and the need to change tactics. Balzan findings include the following:

- (1) The most important reason behind the Gulf-Iranian conflict is the disagreement between their visions; the Gulf's vision is peaceful,

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 33.

²⁹ Ibid., 35.

³⁰ Claudia Balzán, "Security Cooperation in the GCC: Challenges and Opportunities," *Florida International University*, April 25, 2014, <http://magg.fiu.edu.pdf>

cooperative, and moderate, while the Iranian vision relies on aggression to dominate and expand when the chance is available.³¹

- (2) The Iranian strategic vision is based on three elements: the historical element, the geopolitical element, and the religious element. These are reflected by the Persian racism and the insistence on Iran's responsibility for the security of the Gulf and the rule of the Islamic jurist, which Iran is subject to due to its absolute authority.³²
- (3) The political aspect of facing the danger of the Iranian authority in the region starts from consolidating the Gulf efforts of internal reform. This goal is accomplished through gradual policies that expand public participation in taking decisions and solving the Shiite minority problem to prevent Iranian interventions. The Shiite minority issue can be solved by stressing the concept of citizenship as a basis for the state, which deals with its citizens without distinction for any reason.³³
- (4) Iran endeavors to extend military protection to Iranian nuclear facilities in case the diplomatic efforts fail.³⁴
- (5) The experts point out that, if Iran could run away from the control of the IAEA, if the efforts of the international diplomacy fail to contain Iranian rashness to manufacture the nuclear weapon, and if both the United States and Israel fail to destroy the Iranian nuclear programs, it is almost inevitable that Iran will possess nuclear weapons within three to five years.³⁵

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

Jeff Duncan opines that international leniency with Iran would be a bad choice.³⁶ Iran leads the terrorism and has directly enabled groups such as Al Qaeda and Hezbollah. Additionally, Iran continues its policy to own nuclear weapons and tries to change the balance of power in the region with respect to countries like Iraq and Syria. Iran has deep involvement in Latin America because its influence and networks may threaten the United States. Duncan notes that Iran cannot be trusted, and the United States Department of State concludes that Iran's influence in the Western Hemisphere as waning is inconclusive. He supports this argument with the government accountability office report for Congress, which recommends the reassessment and update on Iran.³⁷

This literature review finds that a more lasting way of facing Iran's nuclear threats should be created by the Gulf states and not by the West. It also reveals that uprisings, such as the Arab Spring, should not be used as means for speculating about how countries like Iran will relate to its Arab neighbors. Furthermore, the conflicting views of Iran's behavior with the West should not determine the United States policy toward Iran. Thus, the United States needs to continue to support friendly Arab states, such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and regional institutions to stop the threat of Iran. Finally, these findings will help determine the best way Gulf states face INP.

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

From my preliminary literature review, the proposal tests the following hypotheses:

- (1) The obstacles that limit the efforts of the Gulf states in confronting the Iranian nuclear project are the weaknesses of Gulf political dialogue in convincing Iran to stop completing its nuclear project, the inability of the Arabian Gulf countries to contain Iran, and the absence of a clearly defined Arabian Gulf strategy to secure the region.

³⁶ Jeff Duncan, "An 'Invisible' Iran in the Western Hemisphere: America's Strategic Blind Spot," *The Hill*, October 21, 2014, <http://thehill.com/opinion>.

³⁷ Ibid.

- (2) The strategic vision and equivalent methods to confront INP on advanced level are the Gulf states' possession or production of nuclear weapons, the provision of international guarantees to the Gulf states that Iran shall not exploit its nuclear powers by peaceful purposes, and establishing political dialogue between Gulf states and Iran.

II. THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROJECT, ITS FACTS, AND CONSEQUENCES ON THE GULF

Israeli and American leaders are in full agreement on the need to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. The question, therefore, is not if we should thwart Iran's illicit nuclear ambitions, but rather how we can do so most effectively.

—Robert Wexler³⁸

The Iranian nuclear project (INP) constitutes a serious threat to the security of the Gulf states, creating a strategic disequilibrium of power in the region that gives Iran a dominant position. Therefore, the Gulf states have the right to take all necessary action to counter such threats and to challenge all forthcoming dangers, whether through soft power or via political, strategic, and economic positions, to prevent the INP. The Gulf states should take the necessary measures to establish a Gulf nuclear project to act as a strong deterring factor to ensure their essential protection. This will restore strategic equilibrium between them and Iran.³⁹

After Saddam Hussein's regime fell, Iraq's main capabilities, as well as its military infrastructure, were destroyed. This led to a strategic disequilibrium within the Gulf states region. In addition, it turned the balance of power in favor of Iran. For this reason, Iran likely saw that possessing nuclear weapons was the best preventative action to avoid being attacked and occupied by the United States.⁴⁰

A. SYNOPSIS ABOUT IRAN

According to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Iran is located in western Asia and consists of 1,648,000 square km.⁴¹ Its shares its northern border with Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and the Caspian Sea. Armenia, Turkey, and Iraq are to the

³⁸ Robert Wexler, "Israel and Iran: An Attack Might Be Necessary, but Not Yet," *World Affairs Journal*, May/June 2012, Accessed January 24, 2015, <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article>.

³⁹ Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 59–60.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁴¹ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), *The World Factbook: Iran* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2015), <https://www.cia.gov/library>.

west; Afghanistan and Pakistan are to the east; and the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman are to the south. Iran has a southern coastline that extends over 1,660 km and a northern coastline that extends 800 km along the Caspian Sea. Its capital is Tehran, and its major cities are Mashhad, Isfahan, Tabreez, and Ahwaz.

The geographic location of Iran is a critical factor for its economic security because it determines its ability to cope with economic development. The more strategically important the state's location, resources, work force, and material possibilities, the more it is independent and rich without needing any sustenance of third parties. It is therefore capable of self-support. This gives Iran the benefit of its distinct, centrally located geographic position overlooking the Arabian Gulf and its control over the Strait of Hormuz sharing with Oman, one of the most important factors by which it has acquired its strategic power.⁴²

B. IRANIAN ECONOMIC CAPABILITIES

According to Asmaa Badawi, professor of political science at Kafr el-Sheikh University, the most important economic capabilities in Iran include the following:⁴³

1. Natural Gas and Petroleum

Both resources give Iran a strategic force in the Middle East, which makes it occupy second place worldwide in natural gas reserves, third place in petroleum reserves, and second in petroleum exports. Iran is a major force in the field of energy. In 2005, Iran spent \$4 billion on fuel imports, with an average consumption rate of 4 million barrels of petroleum daily, compared to the peak of 6 million barrels daily in 1974.⁴⁴ In 2004, a large percentage of Iranian natural gas reserves were unexploited. Iran is the third country worldwide to develop the technology to transform gas into liquids. Moreover, many new electrohydraulic stations were constructed to meet the expenses of operating the

⁴² Fahad Mohammed Alshagha, "National Security: Imagine a Comprehensive Concept-Important-Areas-Constituents (Al-Amn Al-watani Taswer Shamel)," *Naif Arab University for Security Science*, 2004, 93, <http://Naif Arab University for Security Science>.

⁴³ Asmaa Badawi, "Economic and Military Capabilities of Iran between Defense and Attack," *Arab News Network*, 2010, Accessed January 24, 2015, <http://Asmaa Badawi>.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

traditional stations run by coal and petroleum. In 2004, Iran inaugurated the first station of wind energy, as well as a land thermal energy station.⁴⁵

2. Industry

Badawi cites twenty-five years of industrial growth in Iran. She indicates that the number of industrial units in which workers exceed ten members is approximately 11,000 units, of which 16 percent are in the sustenance industries, 15.7 percent is in the field of textiles, garments, and leather,⁴⁶ and 17.1 percent are in the field of tools, machinery, and metal equipment. Over one million workers in Iran work in shops that employ fewer than ten employees. Furthermore, to encourage industrial investment during 1990–1995, the Iranian government established many industrial projects, which were able to provide more than 227,000 jobs.⁴⁷ In addition, the state developed the original plans for heavy equipment production, producing 10 to 20 thousand units, and increasing output of the petrochemical industry in 1995. Wade cherub vehicle output increased during that same period to 74 thousand cars, and cement production increased to 16.9 million tons. According to International Organization of Automobile Manufacturers (OICA) claims vehicle production in Iran rose in 2009 by 9.4 percent, when it ranked fifth in the number of car producing countries.⁴⁸

3. Agriculture

Badawi says that 25 percent of the population works in the agricultural sector. Iran has fertile lands and a diverse climate that ranges from mild to cold, enabling it to produce a variety of crops with the use of modern agricultural techniques that have increased production at a rapid rate, yielding a variety of a surplus of grains that is then exported.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers (OICA), *2009 production statistics*, <http://www.oica.net>

⁴⁹ Badawi, <http://Asmaa Badawi>

4. Production

Iran has increased its commercial and trade relations to the global countries. The export of fruits, carpets, and luggage are noteworthy and characterized by quality and low prices compared to European and American prices. Iran was achieved self-sufficiency especially after the war with Iraq and the trade embargo. Iran has benefited from the ban by diversification of production.⁵⁰

5. Economic Problems

Badawi indicates that, despite its economic growth, Iran still faces political problems, and the imposition of economic sanctions and the trade embargo have hindered the growth of the Iranian economy and resulted in the instability of the Iranian government, which in turn resulted in the rapid decline of Iran's economy after President Najad's reelection. Iran has seen a decline in investment, especially in the oil and gas industries, which has led to recession.⁵¹ The World Bank in 2010 ranked Iran 137 among 187 countries. Their report warned that the situation is not attractive for investment. Employment and other economic conditions are leading towards an economic collapse. The report stated that the control of the Revolutionary Guard on Iran's economy caused the economic crisis, increased unemployment, and caused the rise in the cost of living, which is a threat to the underprivileged. According to The Heritage Foundation, Iran ranks ninth from the bottom of 161 countries in economic freedom.⁵²

C. IRANIAN POLITICAL WILL

Sayed Othman argues that Iran continues to use the threat of military force to influence relations with the UAE.⁵³ Iran refused to return the three United Arab Emirates (UAE) islands of Abu Musa, and Greater and Lesser Turnbs. The UAE tried to regain the islands, but Iran has threatened war if the UAE continues to pursue them. Iran has

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Sayed Othman, "Iranian Political Will: Selections Iranian," *Albainah*, November 2002, 1–5, <http://www.albainah.net/21>.

insisted on continuing its nuclear program, claiming it is only for peaceful purposes. It is worse noting that Iranian political issues are centered on the Gulf states to “develop a common security strategy” in the region. Iran stressed that ending the U.S. military presence in the Gulf reduces the threat level. Iran’s policy is to consult with the Gulf states to develop new security arrangements, including a non-aggression pact and a mutual defense treaty.⁵⁴

Othman notes that, in contrast, since 1979 Iran has sought to strengthen the coordination of security measures with Kuwait to prevent drug smuggling. During this visit, they discussed the presence of troops and defense and security agreements, including land bases and facilities specifying those to be used for defending host countries, specifically regarding the U.S. military presence and other countries’ military presence in the Gulf. They agreed that military presence did not constitute an impediment to improving defense ties with countries in the region.⁵⁵ In September 2000, they launched a direct air route between the Iranian city of Yazd and Kuwait, passing through the city of Ahvaz in the Khuzestan Province. In October 2001, Kuwait and Iran agreed to form a joint security committee aimed at fighting drug trafficking, piracy, and terrorism. They agreed to discuss visits between the defense ministers of both countries.

Othman argues that, as a way of enhancing cooperation, in May 1999, the minister of commerce and industry of Oman visited Tehran and signed an extension agreement to promote economic cooperation and stimulate trade between the two countries. Iran and Oman signed a trade agreement in May 2001 for the promotion and protection of investment and avoidance of double taxation.⁵⁶ Their agreement also promoted cooperation in education, agriculture and fishing, environment and health, communications, and water resources. Oman opened a commercial office of the Sultanate in Bandar Abbas, allowing the export of Omani products through Iran to Central Asian countries’ markets, utilizing the railway line, which connects Bandar Abbas and areas of Central Asian countries bordering Iran, in return for Iran opening a shopping center in

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Muscat. Iran welcomed the revitalization of Omani investments. The security and safety of the Strait of Hormuz was a strong incentive to sign a security agreement between the two countries.⁵⁷

Othman points out that agreement made Qatar and Iran agree on more security cooperation in 2000, especially concerning the fight against drugs and smuggling, fraud, and organized crime. In November 2001, Iran formed an upper level committee to monitor the development of the Arab market for Iranian products, especially in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.⁵⁸ Iran opened doors to the nationals of the Gulf states, resulting in canceling the need for visas for the citizens of those countries who wanted to stay for three months or less, to facilitate the freedom to travel and the movement of trade and investors. However, security concerns in January 2002 motivated Iran to reverse this decision to prevent the infiltration of fighters from the “Al Qaeda” to the territory. The Iranian Secretary of Defense followed up with a visit to Qatar on January 25, 2006.⁵⁹

Evidence shows that Iran would like to break free of the isolation imposed on the country. These relations can be used by Arab countries as a strategy of “soft power” to dissuade Iran from completing its nuclear program. Arab countries negotiate using modern era mechanisms of logic and mediation to break the isolation of the Iranian economy and at the same time neutralize the risks and the attempts to dominate the Gulf region and to act as the Gulf police.

D. THE IRANIAN REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS

Steven Ohren talks about the Islamic Revolution ousted in 1979 against Mohammad Reza Shah by Ayatollah Khomeini. The first thing the new government did was establish the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Since that time, the IRGC has had the military power to influence the country’s economy and foreign policy; it also

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

controls the INP. The IRGC has outside influence like Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Shiite paramilitaries all over the Gulf states.⁶⁰

The IRGC played a leading role during the first Gulf War, where there were many battles to regain control of several Iranian cities and take them back from the Iraqi army. The general mobilization of the IRGC forces included the naval and air force intelligence, as well as its own forces and Special Forces. There are in its ranks 90,000 regular soldiers and about 300,000 reservists. Observers believe that the IRGC plays a big role in supporting the Islamic resistance movements in Israel under the guise of such groups as the Lebanese Hezbollah's Party. This prompted the United States to classify the IRGC as a terrorist organization. The IRGC uses several types of weapons. These include missiles/tanks/fighter, jets, and a large section of homemade weapons.⁶¹

E. THE EQUILIBRIUM OF POWER BETWEEN IRAN AND THE GULF STATES

According to Cordesman and Kleiber, there is an imbalance in the balance of power between Iran and the Gulf states in Iran's favor.⁶² Iran possesses newer and more sophisticated weapons than any of the other Gulf states. Table 1 shows the balance of power between Iran and the Gulf states.

⁶⁰ Steven Ohren, *Iran's Revolutionary Guard: The Threat That Grows while America Sleeps* (Virginia: Potomac Books, 2012), 26.

⁶¹ Ibid., 27.

⁶² Anthony H. Cordesman and Martin Kleiber, *Iran's Military Forces and War fighting Capabilities the Threat in the Northern Gulf* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007), 3–9.

Table 1. The Balance of Power between Iran and Gulf States⁶³

Manpower	Iran	Iraq*	Bahrain	Kuwait	Oman	Qatar	KSA	UAE	Yemen
Total Active	545,000	136,000	11,200	15,500	41,700	12,400	199,500	50,500	66,700
Regular	420,000	136,400	11,200	15,500	41,700	12,400	124,500	50,500	66,700
National Guard & Other	125,000	0	0	0	6400	0	75,000	0	0
Reserve	350,000	0	0	23,700	0	0		0	40,000
Paramilitary	40,000+	25,400+	10,160	4,400	4,400	0	15,500+	0	70,000

As illustrated in Table 1, there is rapprochement between Iran and individual Gulf states. The defense budget is significantly higher in Saudi Arabia (\$27.2 billion). The Iranian defense budget does not exceed \$9.1 billion.

⁶³ Ibid.3

Table 2. The Balance of Military Forces in 2007 between Iran and Gulf States⁶⁴

State	Tankers	Air-land missiles	Air-land missiles	Marine units		Patriot	Defense budget (\$ billion)
				Surface units	Submarines		
KSA	900	33 batteries	33 batteries	34	-	20	27.2
UAE	516	8 batteries	8 batteries	18	-	-	-
Oman	153	50	50	13	-	-	2.4
Kuwait	290	10	10	10	-	5	3.3
Qatar	30	75	75	7	-	-	1.5
Bahrain	140	2	2	11	-	-	0.315
TOTAL	2029	178	178	93	-	25	34.715
Iraq & Yemen	Iraq and Yemen military forces are suffering after the fall of the previous regimes from the interception of the armed militias and the Houthis in Yemen precisely, which in turn led to weak military powers.						
Iran	1565	76	306	59	3	2	9.1

Table 2 displays statistical data and comparisons between individual Gulf states and Iran. For example, Iran has more troops (545,000), while the number of troops in all the Gulf states' combined forces is 533,500. That Gulf states collectively own more tanks (2,029) compared to Iran (1,565). The Gulf states collectively own more land-air missiles (178 batteries) compared to Iran (76 batteries). The Gulf states collectively own 573 fighter jets, and Iran has 306. The Gulf states collectively owns 93 naval units, while Iran has 59 and an additional three submarines. The Gulf states combined have 25 patriot missile batteries, while Iran has none. The Gulf states combined have a defense budget of \$34.715 billion, while Iran's defense budget does not exceed \$9.1 billion.

Cordesman, and Kleiber point out that the Gulf states are superior to Iran in military strength in every aspect except for the number of troops. Iran is seeking to

⁶⁴ Ibid.3

acquire nuclear weapons to compensate for this deficiency and to increase its ability to extend its impact in the Gulf region with a nuclear weapon as a strategic deterrent. Iran excels in range of missiles, as well as in its ability to manufacture those rockets.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Ibid, 134.

III. THE REALITY OF THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM AND DEVELOPMENTS

Iran's current strategy has four main priorities: preserving the Islamic regime, safeguarding Iran's sovereignty, defending its nuclear ambitions, and expanding its influence in the region and the Islamic world.

—Peter Alsiss, Marissa Allison, and Anthony Cordesman⁶⁶

Said Amir Arjomand argues that Iran has developed powerful nuclear power plants.⁶⁷ This development was supported by the country's quest to control the region. Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the former governor of Iran, realized the importance of having nuclear capability to control the Gulf region and to maintain Iran's position as a world power. This was important considering that nuclear power development is believed to give the country a significant voice in the region. Pahlavi's desire to develop nuclear capability to control the gulf region was critical to the success of the industry. As a result, Iran sought to acquire and develop its nuclear capability as a move to join the nuclear club.⁶⁸

Arjomand points out that the United States approved of Iran's program. This was due to friendly relations that existed with Iran during the rule of the Shah. However, after the successful Islamic revolution in the country, the Shah was no longer in power; the country was left under Khomeini's rule. At the time, Iran's leaders were not interested in nuclear power. They stopped the nuclear program, given that Iran had the means to produce cheaper energy, such as oil and gas. Iran's war with Iraq and Saddam Hussein's use of chemical weapons against the country led Iran's leaders to begin appreciating the need to develop nuclear weapons.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Peter Alsiss, Marissa Allison, and Anthony H. Cordesman, *US and Iranian Strategic Competition in the Gulf State and Yemen* (CSIS Report No. 111121) (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic International Studies, 2011), http://csis.org/files/publication/111121_Iran_Ch5_GulfState.pdf

⁶⁷ Said Amir Arjomand, *After Khomeini Iran under His Successors* (New York: University Press, 2009), 200–12.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

Arjomand contends that after the death of Khomeini, Iran understood the importance of acquiring powerful deterrent nuclear weapons for war. This context led Iran to revive the nuclear program under the pretext of using of nuclear energy to supplement energy needs in the country. The program's main objective was to produce nuclear weapons that would serve as a means of deterring exposure to another chemical weapons attack. They also developed nuclear power to help the country establish control over the Gulf states region.⁷⁰

A. PHASES OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROJECT

David Patrikarakos mentions that the evolution of the INP went through a number of phases before the process was a success. The INP passed through three important phases:⁷¹

1. Phase I

The first phase took place during the reign of the Shah of Iran. With the help of Germany, it established an integrated program of a nuclear reactor in the city of Bushehr. The partnership with Germany was critical in helping the company make gains in the business. The program saw Iran continue to construct new nuclear reactors south of Bushehr, with each plant having an output of 1200 MW of energy.⁷²

Patrikarakos points out that during this phase, the United States feared losing Iran's contracts with American companies. Iran was urged to cancel contracts for reactors and nuclear plants with all other countries. The United States agreed to supply Iran with eight reactors to produce electricity. This package came with the provision to provide the nuclear fuel for these reactors and the basic methods and materials necessary for them to operate. However, the fall of the Shah and the rise of Khomeini stopped the deal from

⁷⁰ Ibid., 36

⁷¹ David Patrikarakos, *Nuclear Iran: The Birth of an Atomic State* (London: I. B Tauris and Co. Ltd., 2012), 42, 82.

⁷² Ibid., 42.

being implemented. The United States confiscated the \$8 billion paid by Iran as part of the price of nuclear reactors.⁷³

Gar Smith argues that after the overthrow of the Shah, the termination of the contract to sell reactors and necessary nuclear fuel, and the confiscation of \$8 billion, all nuclear development work on the reactors stopped completely in Bushehr.⁷⁴ U.S. opposition to Khomeini led the United States to stop the flight of hundreds of Iranian scientists. The United States further enacted a ban on the export of nuclear technology. The U.S. decision happened was after it succumbed to pressure from both Germany and France to stop its cooperation with the Iranian government until sufficient assurances were made that Iran would be using nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes. In this context, Iran was pressured to allow international inspection committees to inspect Iran's nuclear facilities.⁷⁵

2. Phase II

David Albright and Andrea Stricker argue that Phase II occurred after Iraq's war with Iran.⁷⁶ In this war, Iraq bombed Iran with chemical weapons. The attack made Iran leaders realize the importance of owning a nuclear weapon of deterrence to counter possible threats. Iran turned to revive the nuclear program, especially after the deterioration of the Iranian army. Iran asked a German company to complete the Bushehr reactor. Germany's failure to accept Iran's request forced Iran to appeal to Russia to complete the construction of the Bushehr reactor. The Russian Foreign Minister, Andrei Kozyrev, announced Russia's willingness to supply Iran with civilian nuclear technology. Besides, Iran entered into a deal with Argentinian and Spanish companies based on recommendations from the German company in 1978. Meanwhile, in June 1981, an

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Smith Gar, "Iran's Nuclear Program: Made in the USA (Historical Analysis)," *Berkeley Daily Planet*, April 25, 2013, <http://www.berkeleydailyplanet.com/issue/2013-04-26/article/41010>

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ David Albright and Andrea Stricker, "Iran's Nuclear Program," *USIP*, accessed January 19, 2015, <http://iranprimer.usip.org>.

Israeli air strike demolished Iraq's Osirak nuclear research facility. Also, in the period between 1984 and 1987, Iraq attacked Iran's Bushehr nuclear.⁷⁷

Fathi Mamduh argues that effort enabled Iran to expand the nuclear structure by developing its technical and scientific capacity for the workers in the nuclear field.⁷⁸ Additionally, Iran invited nuclear scientists to return home. The country further sent missions to the Iranian cadres to receive advanced scientific training in nuclear fields. As a result, the research in the nuclear field was enhanced and developed in Iran.⁷⁹

3. Phase III

Iran made deliberate and steady progress in its quest to achieve the full nuclear fuel cycle. It advanced its uranium-mining infrastructure, uranium conversion capabilities, indigenous heavy water reactor and associated heavy water production plant, and uranium enrichment programs.

—David Albright and Andrea Stricker⁸⁰

Albright and Stricker point out that Phase III was a significant phase leading to the current crisis facing the INP and its international relations with the United States and other countries. The phase began at the end of the second Gulf War in 1991 and the subsequent breakup of the former Soviet Union. During this period, Iranian leaders realized that a nuclear force could be exploited by regional and international variables. This action forced Iran to push for Islamic power on matters to do with its nuclear development. Iran's quest for Islamic leadership led to its possible confrontation with the United States. Owning nuclear weapons may cause the United States to enter this confrontation reluctantly. This was because of the consequences being too great compared to Iran's desire to build and lead an Islamic bloc of non-Arab countries on the continent of Asia. Despite the imposition of a total ban by the United States on Iran, and

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Fathi Mamduh, *Iran's National Security: Sources of Threat and Response Mechanisms* (Al-Amn al-qawmī al-Īrānī: Maṣādir al-tahdīd wa-ālīyāt al-muwājahah) (Abu Dhabi, UAE: The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 2006), 233–34.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Albright and Stricker, "Iran's Nuclear Program."

pressure on Russia and other Iran providers of nuclear technology, Iran continued to obtain nuclear capabilities.

Ahmed Mohamoud, deputy chief editor of the Arab Strategic Report argues that Iran took advantage of the collapse of the former Soviet Union.⁸¹ The collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) allowed Iran to import nuclear warheads from the Islamic republics in Asia, which increased its nuclear input. Besides, Iran imported atomic scientists from the former Soviet Union to work in Iran's nuclear facilities. Mohamoud points out that Iran signed an agreement with China to cooperation in nuclear development. In this agreement, China provided electromagnetic devices, an experimental nuclear reactor, private medical diagnoses, a nuclear research facility, training/education, equipment for nuclear physics, and the production of radioactive isotopes to Iran. In addition, Iran renewed a request made by the former Shah to deliver steam generators used in cooling nuclear reactors from Italy. This phase ended with success after Iran and major powers P5+1 ((group of six countries get together in 2006 about INP which are: the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, France, China, and Germany) reached an historic agreement for the continuation of the INP. This was after Iran provided guarantees that its nuclear power was to be used for peaceful purposes. This appears to be the beginning of the real threat to the Gulf states. This came against the background of Iran's public declaration that they have the right to possess nuclear facilities. The worry was that acquisition may lead to the domination of Iran over the Gulf states and threaten the security and stability of the region.⁸²

B. THE MOST IMPORTANT IRANIAN NUCLEAR FACILITIES

Iran's growing interest to acquire nuclear capabilities was reflected in the successful creation of many nuclear facilities. At the end of the Iran-Iraq war, developments were accelerated because Iran's leaders had realized the importance of nuclear weapons as an effective deterrence weapon. For Iran, the move was significant in

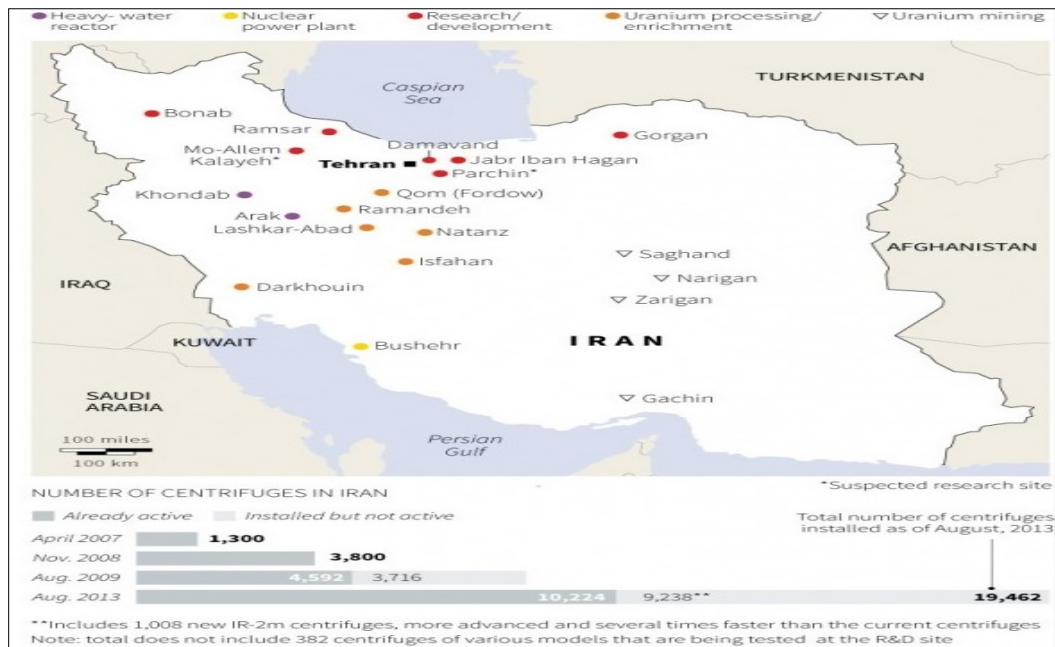
⁸¹ Ahmed I. Mahmoud, "INP: The Motives between the Military and Peaceful Application," *Albainah*, 2010, Accessed March 8, 2015, <http://www.albainah.net1429>.

⁸² Ibid.

helping it be protected from possible attacks with chemical weapons, or possibly even nuclear weapons. The developments also allowed them the ability to impose their influence and dominate the Gulf region.

Figure 1 shows the most important Iranian nuclear facilities and their capabilities.

Figure 1. Mapping Iran's Nuclear Facilities⁸³



(1) Bushehr

The Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) points out that Bushehr is located on the Arabian Gulf coast.⁸⁴ Two reactors were constructed for energy production but not completed during the reign of the Shah. Each reactor is capable of producing 1200 MW. These are the two reactors, which the German company refused to finish due to pressure from the United States. Russia finished the installation of hardware and technical equipment. They are at the center of the INP in question.

⁸³ Ben Walsh, "Mapping Iran's Nuclear Facilities," *Reuters*, November 2013, <http://blogs.reuters.com/data>.

⁸⁴ Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), *Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant* (CNS Report No. 184), Monterey Institute of International Studies, 2013, <http://www.nti.org/facilities>.

(2) Gorgan

Emanuele Ottolenghi points out that the program was located on the Caspian coast.⁸⁵ The program was developed with Russia's support. Russia built two reactors, where each is capable of producing 440 MW. The Mujahideen Khalq Organization indicated that the reactor was installed in the huge Russian site in Gorgan on the Caspian Sea. Its installation was conducted under the supervision of Russian physicists.

(3) DarKhovin

The NTI points out that DarKhovin is located in the province of Khuzestan near the city of Ahvaz, where the Chinese constructed two reactors, each capable of producing 360 MW.⁸⁶ The Mujahideen Khalq Organization has reported that China has offered to Iran the equipment and technicians to enrich uranium on this site. This was supposed to be a French nuclear power plant capable of producing 935 MW, but the project has not been completed to date.

(4) Tehran

Al J. Venter states that Tehran has a small research reactor built during the reign of the Shah, capable of producing 5 MW.⁸⁷ This reactor was built by the United States in 1967. It is dedicated for research purposes. The reactor cannot be used for the production of nuclear weapons and nuclear materials.

(5) Kleih Landmarks

Anthony Cordesman and Khalid Rodhan point out that Kleih landmarks is located near the Caspian Sea region of northwest of Tehran. It is a dedicated center of military nuclear research.⁸⁸ Iran wanted to collaborate with India to build a nuclear reactor

⁸⁵ Emanuele Ottolenghi, *Iran: The Looming Crisis: Can the West Live with Iran's Nuclear Threat?* (London; Profile Books, 2010), 212.

⁸⁶ Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), *Darkhovin Nuclear Power Plant* (CNS Report No. 186), Monterey Institute of International Studies, Accessed March 11, 2015, <http://www.nti.org/facilities>.

⁸⁷ Al J. Venter, *Iran's Nuclear Option: Tehran's Quest for the Atom Bomb* (Havertown, PA: Casemate, 2005), 129.

⁸⁸ Anthony H. Cordesman and Khalid R. Rodhan, *Iran's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Real and Potential Threat*, vol. 23 (Washington, DC: CSIS, 2006), 114.

capable of producing 10 MW in this location, but this was canceled. Today, the site has been used to train the Iranian Organization for Nuclear energy personnel.

(6) Isfahan

“The central Iranian city of Isfahan is believed to be the core of the Islamic Republic’s nuclear weapons program.”

—Ilan Berman⁸⁹

According to the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), Isfahan is a military research center where experts from China and North Korea worked.⁹⁰ This does not contain any nuclear reactors, although it is designed to incorporate a nuclear reactor capable of producing 27 MW.

(7) Karaj

According to NTI, Karaj is located near Tehran and is used for medical and agricultural purposes. It contains a cyclotron or nuclear accelerator for research purposes.⁹¹ The center is believed not to produce nuclear weapons for war.

(8) Saghand

Jamal S. Al-Suwaidi mentions that Saghand is located in the central province of Yazd, Iran.⁹² It is a uranium mine and does not contain nuclear facilities. It has huge amounts of uranium, up to 5,000 tons at the very least. In 1987, Iran announced that it had plans to set up a factory for enriched uranium oxide known as “yellow cakes” in this region.

⁸⁹ Ilan Berman, *Tehran Rising: Iran’s Challenge to the United States* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 38.

⁹⁰ Nuclear Sites (ISIS), *Nuclear Iran: Esfahan*, Institute for Science and International Security, accessed March 11, 2015, <http://www.isisnucleariran.org/sites/detail/esfahan/>

⁹¹ Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), *Karaj Agricultural and Medical Research Center* (CNS Report No. 239), Monterey Institute of International Studies, accessed March 11, 2015, <http://www.nti.org/facilities>.

⁹² Jamal S. Al-Suwaidi, *Iran and the Gulf: A Search for Stability* (Abu Dhabi, UAE: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 1996), 279.

(9) Buroujerd

This program is located in the Khorasan province near the border with Turkmenistan. The British company MW Kellogg is building a factory for the production of ammonia and urea, which can possibly be modified to produce heavy water.⁹³

(10) Tabriz

Adrian Stubbs mentions that the local population of this site was forced to leave the region; the IRGC built a series of regular industrial complexes, which are just a camouflage.⁹⁴ “Smoke, steam, and debris from the explosion shot hundreds of feet into the night sky from the chemical site deep inside the mountain.”⁹⁵

Gulf states believe that Iran’s insistence on the distribution of nuclear facilities in all parts of Iran (away from residential areas) and the displacement of the population near these facilities is clear evidence that its nuclear facilities are producing nuclear weapons. This issue is a source of concern and a threat to Gulf Arab neighbors and the Middle East. But Iran insists that the nuclear program is for peaceful energy, not a bomb. These facilities are to produce energy for peaceful uses.⁹⁶

C. THE THREATS FACING THE GULF STATES IN THE EVENT OF THE COMPLETION OF THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROJECT

Jameel Althyabi argues that Iran’s possession of nuclear weapons will increase its domination and control over the Gulf region.⁹⁷ One of powers that Iran may have is exporting chaos to the neighboring Gulf states in an attempt to give the ruling time to Shiite. Iran’s foreign policy intervenes in the internal affairs of the Gulf states: it stirs Shiite minorities, supports them, and incites them to claim their rights. Iran’s policy

⁹³ Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Military Balance in the Middle East* (Washington, DC: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004), 514.

⁹⁴ Adrian P. Stubbs, *The NSA Files, Code Name: Venusan in Black from the Chronicles of the National Security Agency* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, Corp. 2008), 273.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Adler Michael, “The Iran Primer,” Iran and the IAEA: USIP, accessed April 3, 2015, <http://iranprimer.usip.org>.

⁹⁷ Althyabi, *Iran and Crab Dancing*, 160–71.

depends on military support like what is happening nowadays in Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, and Bahrain. Iran is trying to increase control of the Strait of Hormuz over Oman to deprive the Arab States of their ability to export gas and oil. This has resulted in the emergence of extremist organizations, whether of the Salafist jihadi or al-Qaeda, and the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). They do this by restricting traffic in the Gulf and threatening passing ships and oil tankers, which threatens unrest in the Gulf states.⁹⁸

Althyabi argues that if the INP is completed, possible threats in the Gulf area might escalate, exporting violence, chaos, and terror. From the GCC's perspective, when Iran owns nuclear weapons, the first result is exported violence, chaos, and terror to the Gulf states. This would be through working to exploit the Shiites who are in the Gulf states. After that, Iran would create chaos and internal strife, and even give an excuse to intervene to protect the Shiite minorities in the Gulf states.⁹⁹

Althyabi says that Iran would like to export its successful experience in Iraq to neighboring Gulf states through the militarization of extremist groups and financial support to certain political parties, such as Hezbollah, the pro-Iran force in Lebanon. Iran designated logistical and human support missions to these groups and parties for creating disturbances and confusion within the governments and security systems of these countries. They look forward to creating chaos and unrest, and bringing instability with the intention of increasing lawlessness and creating strong justification for its intervention to protect the Shiites. Iran's plans for expansion have become clear in that Iran is seeking to create internal sectarian problems for the purposes of penetrating other countries in the region.¹⁰⁰ Althyabi also mentions that the completion of the INP might encourage the dissemination of extremist ideology in order to ignite revolutions and overthrow the governments. The region may seek to promote certain extremist religious ideas through rights and social justice.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹ Ibid

Christin Maraschall states that Iran and major powers 5 +1 reached a historic agreement in November 2013 on the continuation of Iran's nuclear program on the condition that its use be peaceful.¹⁰² It is difficult to predict Iran's intentions or determine whether it is committed to developing nuclear power for peaceful purposes. The United States also confirmed that it does not rule out a military option to resolve the Iranian nuclear file, alongside Israel repeatedly confirmed warnings about Iran's possession of nuclear weapons, and has threatened to launch an air strike on Iran's nuclear facilities as they did with the Iraqi nuclear reactor.¹⁰³

Bernard and Gotowicki argue that the Iranian response to the American or Israeli attacks may lead to the participation of the Gulf states already in the war, especially if Iran attacks airbases or U.S. Naval vessels in the Gulf states.¹⁰⁴ This may lead to regional war that threatens the security of the Gulf states. It may also affect the security and stability in the entire region.

D. FROM A TURKISH PERSPECTIVE

Özden Oktav argues that there is a bigger threat, namely, the difficulty of reaching a common formula for the security of the Gulf region.¹⁰⁵ Iran demands to have a role in the Gulf security arrangements and urges Gulf states to reject the foreign presence in general and the U.S. presence in particular, which it sees as guaranteeing security and protection from Iran's expansion ambitions. In this regard, Iran launched several formats for the security of the Gulf states, which was risky because of the possibility of a nuclear arms race, which is not confined to the Gulf states. The rationale behind this dilemma is that such risk may extend to all the Arab countries that would seek to acquire nuclear weapons to achieve a strategic balance with Iran.¹⁰⁶ As noted by Prince Turki Al-Faisal,

¹⁰² Christin Maraschall, *Iran's Persian Gulf Policy from Khomeini to Khatami* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 159.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Bernard Reich and Stephen H. Gotowicki, "The United States and the Persian Gulf in the Bush Administration," *FMSO*, 1991, <http://fmso.leavenworth.army>.

¹⁰⁵ Özden Zeynep Oktav, "The Gulf States and Iran: A Turkish Perspective," *Middle East Policy Council*, 2011, <http://www.mepec.org>.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

petitioning Riyadh to acquire nuclear weapons in the case of Iran's possession of similar weapons. Therefore, the GCC needs to get guarantees from the international community to establish a joint security formula with the regional parties in the Gulf states, including Iran. Iran's possession of nuclear weapons leads to strained relations and focuses on good-neighborly relations, and enhances mutual trust. There are also benefits to renouncing the use of force, instead solving problems through negotiation and constructive dialogue.¹⁰⁷

Mohamed Edres argues that the possible radioactive contamination could be devastating to the Gulf states and the entire region.¹⁰⁸ The health of the people in the region is at risk: they are threatened by increased environmental changes because of the nuclear waste. Proximity to Iran's nuclear facilities exposes Gulf states to the devastating effects on people and the environment from radioactive contamination. The nuclear reactor of Bushehr is located just 280 kilometers from Kuwait and depends on imported technologies from Russia. These Russian technologies do not have guaranteed nuclear safety elements, putting the Gulf states at risk in the event of any radioactive leakage, which could be transmitted by the wind as deadly radiation crosses the Gulf.¹⁰⁹ Iran may also dispose of nuclear waste in the Arabian Gulf, which is where the Gulf states obtain fresh water through desalination plants. There is a potential for a serious pollution crisis if there is leakage of radioactive nuclear material. The negative effects on all those who use water in the neighboring Gulf states and the possibility of contracting different types of deadly diseases can create a continuous negative impact for decades, as well as the possible destabilization of economic security.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Mohamed A. Edres, "Regional Challenges Iran's Nuclear Program (Althadiat Aleqlemiah lel barnameg alnwawi al Erani)," *Albainah*, August 1, 2006, <http://www.albainah.net/index.aspx?function=Item&id=10009&lang>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Kristian Ulrichsen argues that the concept of Gulf security is at risk, and Iranian dominance is a bigger threat to the region's stability.¹¹¹ This is through Iran's threat to close the Strait of Hormuz and to attack foreign ships in the Arabian Gulf. This has threatened to hamper the export of oil from the Gulf states, which depend on oil as their main source of income. It is evident that the Gulf states face serious threats from Iran's possession of expansionism with nuclear capabilities that enable them to own and manufacture nuclear weapons, causing an imbalance of power in the region. Iran takes advantage of its nuclear capability to impose its hegemony and control the Arab countries and encourages rumors to promote anxiety in the Gulf states to expand political unrest. In addition, one threat is closing the Gulf states and cutting off income.¹¹² The Gulf states have to be careful and keep Iran from achieving its ambitions in the region. Iran uses its authority and dominance in the economic, political, and military fields, so Iran might be able to exert control, either directly or indirectly.¹¹³

The researcher believes that Iran still has the right to develop its INP for peaceful use, but Iranian foreign policy is still accused of interfering in the affairs of neighboring countries, and the most important aspects of the chaos that Iran is exploiting are meant to destabilize the security and stability of the Gulf states. It might also mean creating chaos through inciting the Shiites in Bahrain and Yemen to demonstrate and seize the Presidential Palace. Iran still tries to do the same thing to Shiites in the Eastern Province in Saudi Arabia by encouraging them to take the positions of opposition from Saudi regimes. Iran further demands autonomy for Shiites and the right to enjoy the revenues of oil more than the rest of the cities of the kingdom, as the oil fields located in their territory. In addition, from an Arab perspective, completing the INP will possibly expose the Gulf to the risk of war. Iran's persistence to acquire nuclear weapons could ignite wars in the Arabian Gulf region between the United States and its allies, and Iran.

¹¹¹ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, "Internal and External Security in the Arab Gulf States," *Middle East Policy* 16, no. 2 (2009), <http://www.mepec.org>.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

E. THE EFFORTS OF THE GULF STATES TO FACE THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROJECT

James H. Lebovic argues that there were varied reactions in the international community over the INP.¹¹⁴ Some states refused to project the threat to the neighboring Gulf region and the Middle East, both in terms of the imposition of Iranian hegemony or in terms of radioactive contamination that may occur, and threatens the entire Gulf region, its displays, and its citizens. The countries that supported Iran's possession of nuclear capabilities in peaceful areas (Russia, North Korea, and China) argue that Iran is incapable of producing nuclear weapons and that Iran just wants uranium at a rate ranging between 3.5 percent to 4.0 percent; the proportion is non-sufficient for the production of nuclear weapons.

In 2006, leaders of the GCC announced, during the "Jaber Summit" in Riyadh, the start of a joint study to build a peaceful nuclear program.¹¹⁵ In a turn of events, the Emir of Qatar confirmed the danger of the Gulf states region in the presence of two nuclear countries. On the outskirts of the region are India and Pakistan, in addition to Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons, which makes Gulf and Arab countries vulnerable. In 2009, the Emir's concerns forced the UAE to establish the Nuclear Energy Corporation. In pursuit of its commitment, Saudi Arabia in 2014 signed an energy agreement with China after the completion of King Abdullah City, with respect to atomic and renewable energy.¹¹⁶

The researcher notices that the efforts of Gulf states are not sufficient to counter the risks to those countries. Attitudes are still not unified in that regard. Even if Iran acquired a nuclear weapon, it could not be used in the Gulf region because there would be consequences. The big problem is that the possession of this weapon may allow Iran to

¹¹⁴ James H. Lebovic, *Deterring International Terrorism and Rogue States US National Security Policy after 9/11* (London: Routledge, 2007), 61.

¹¹⁵ Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), *Nuclear on Saudi Arabia* (CNS Report), Monterey Institute of International Studies, April 2013, <http://www.nti.org/country-profiles/saudi-arabia/nuclear/>.

¹¹⁶ Fatah Al-Rahman Youssef, "Saudi Arabia, China Sign Nuclear and Renewable Energy Agreement," *ASHARQ AL-AWSAT*, August 10, 2014, <http://www.aawsat.net>.

impose its control and threaten the Gulf states. A potential confrontation may destabilize the security of Middle East.

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IV. STRATEGIC VISION IN THE FACE OF THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROJECT

Iran has been tirelessly spending massive amounts of money to pursue its nuclear program. It all started when Iran signed a contract with the United States in 1957 to establish twenty-three nuclear power plants to produce energy for peaceful purposes.¹¹⁷ Then, in 1976, Iran contracted with Germany to build a nuclear reactor in Bushehr and to train Iranian technicians in the field of nuclear physics.¹¹⁸ Within a year, Germany refused to complete construction of the nuclear reactor in Bushehr, and Iran immediately started negotiations with Russia to complete the job. Soon thereafter, Iran purchased highly enriched fissile materials from Russia and Argentina. In 1990, Iran signed an agreement with China to complete the nuclear plans and to train Iranian scientists at the Chinese Nuclear Research Center.¹¹⁹

Iran did not get approval from the international community to continue its nuclear program. For example, the United States, the European Union, and Israel expressed their serious concerns over Iran's pursuit of nuclear capabilities.¹²⁰ The United States successfully limited Iran's nuclear ambitions by stalling construction. In addition, the United States elicited European approval and imposed strict regulations on the export of nuclear technology that Iran demanded. Furthermore, the United States exerted political and economic pressure on countries that cooperated with Iran to prevent them from providing help that might allow Iran to possess nuclear capabilities. The thought was that Iran's economy would likely collapse and its leadership would face a public revolution and lose power.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 178–82.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

Jeffrey Boutwell points out that Arab countries rejected Iran's possession of nuclear capabilities.¹²² For example, Egypt disliked the INP because Iran did not face threats that justified its possession of nuclear weapons. Moreover, Iran's possession of nuclear weapons disturbed the strategic balance in the Gulf region. The Gulf states specifically expressed their concern about Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons. Iran has a reputation of supporting and practicing terrorism, which increases the concern over Iran's nuclear capabilities. Furthermore, Iran interfered with the internal affairs of the GCC and occupied three UAE islands in the Gulf, declaring that they were under Iranian sovereignty.¹²³

Khalil Hussein believes that it is essential that the Gulf states form a strategic vision for facing any possible dangers that result from the completion of the INP.¹²⁴ The Gulf states have sought to abort the project through the use of their political, economic, and strategic weight in the international community. This includes all possible peaceful ways to stop the project. At the same time, the Gulf states are creating their own nuclear projects in the region to provide a counter balance to any possible Iranian threats.¹²⁵ The Iranian threat is not only the nuclear program, but also ambition to expand and gain control in the region. This raises many concerns for Gulf states and has led to their mistrust of Iran. Furthermore, Iran has proven to have no commitment to good neighborly relations by its constant attempts to change the demographic structure of the Gulf Arab region, by influencing some minority groups in the region using their religious allies (Shiites) and promoting sectarianism in the region, which is a big threat to the Gulf countries' security and stability.¹²⁶

¹²² Jeffrey Boutwell and Joseph Rotblat, *Addressing the Nuclear Weapons Threat: The Russell-Einstein Manifesto Fifty Years On* (Rome, Italy: Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, 2005), 78.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Hussein Khalil, "Iran's Nuclear Program Gulf Security Concerns," *BlogSpot*, March 14, 2008, <http://drkhalilhussein.blogspot.com>.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

The Gulf states' strategic vision to confront the Iranian project is composed of two dimensions. The first encompasses the use of soft power in different fields, such as economies and politics. Also, the Gulf states should make use of all available strategic tools, including, but not limited to, their relationship with United States and the international community's rejection of the project. The second dimension has a protective vision that involves creating a nuclear project in the Gulf to restore the strategic balance and to protect the Gulf states from any possible threats.¹²⁷

A. FIRST DIMENSION: SOFT POWER

It is crucial for Gulf states to use soft power strategies first when dealing with Iran. They must also benefit from the existing affinity between Iran and the region, as was positively encouraged by Iran's leaders Rafsanjani and Khatami.¹²⁸ Using this kind relationship could encourage cooperation and be useful in convincing Iran to stop its nuclear project. As mentioned in previous chapters, the INP threatened the safety of the Gulf states before it threatened the United States and its allies. The INP could also lead to a devastating war in the region, and the Gulf states, including Iran, will pay the price.

Soft power, as defined by Joseph Nye, is "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies."¹²⁹ This implies the exclusion of military means. Soft power also uses civilizational, economic, and promotional means of achieving its goal. Economic means can also be used and can prove to be quite effective for Gulf-Iranian relations. Therefore, Gulf states must employ as much political power as possible to control to negotiations with Iran and Iran's behavior and interests in the region. Using soft power can also include cultural and ideological means, which might create a general opinion in the region opposing the completion of the INP.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Althyabi, *Iran and Crab Dancing*, 87.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 204.

¹²⁹ Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 12.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

Moreover, soft power may be used in political and economic arenas. For example, in the politics, Gulf states must use political weight, influence, and shared interests (oil and gas) with the United States and the European Union by stressing that any possible Iranian threat to the region could result in the inability to export oil and gas. If oil and gas production and exportation stops, it will lead to serious consequences on a global scale and possibly to economic collapse in a large part of the world. Therefore, Gulf states should try to persuade international powers to seriously oppose the completion of the INP, or at least manage to have guarantees that the nuclear capacities will be used for peaceful purposes only.

1. Political Soft Power Strategy

Nathan Gonzalez points out that Gulf states should use soft power in politics using several means.¹³¹ First, they should have a balanced dialogue with Iran to discourage its nuclear project. If the project is completed, Iran must provide assurances that it will use its nuclear capacities for peaceful purposes, so it will not be a threat to the safety and security of the Gulf states and the region. In addition, during international forums, the Gulf states should emphasize the importance of making the region of the Arab Gulf free from weapons of mass destruction.¹³²

Mabon Simon argues that soft power should work in accordance with the closing statement of the 31st GCC summit, which took place in Abu Dhabi in 2010.¹³³ It is necessary to coordinate successfully between the Gulf states through GCC and the Arab League. This coordination will lead to a joint Arab–Gulf strategy to set the minimal political approach to contain Iran without causing any national or regional conflicts. The continuation of the negotiations between Western countries and Tehran gives hope of reaching a peaceful solution that the INP be used for peaceful purposes only. Moreover, the announcement aims to reach a political agreement that circumvents any concerns

¹³¹ Nathan Gonzalez, *Engaging Iran: The Rise of a Middle East Powerhouse and America's Strategic Choice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007), 96.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Simon Mabon, *Saudi Arabia and Iran Soft Power Rivalry in the Middle East* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013), 101.

about the project. In addition to achieve stability in the region, Iran has the right to use the nuclear power for peaceful purposes under the standards and instructions of the IAEA.

Zafer Alajmi believes that the strategic importance of the Gulf region should prepare a joint approach to prioritize Arab's cases, starting with national goals, which will lead to the common regional goal.¹³⁴ It is essential that Arab countries continue the open dialogue to assure trust and collaboration, which will lead to a common national strategy. Alajmi urges the region to identify political frameworks in order to use the joint military power as the Peninsula Shield Force through the military cooperation between the Gulf states to prevent any security vacuum that allows an external intervention in the region. The GCC has to restore the security policies of Gulf States so that they can achieve a higher level of national security through identifying the sources of threats and the means to confront them.

Alajmi argues that Gulf states have to remind the United States and the EU that Iran will use its nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes only.¹³⁵ These guarantees are necessary, given the importance of the Arab Gulf supplying the industrial world with 60 percent of its oil and gas needs. Moreover, any threats to the security of Gulf region will likely have an impact on oil production.¹³⁶

The political status of the Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia, may play an important role in securing the region without any direct confrontations with Iran. It is possible because of Saudi Arabia's political influence on the international community and its continuing efforts to provide humanitarian assistance all over the world. In addition, Saudi Arabia positively supports regional and international issues. It has also taken a strong stand and refused an offered seat as a non-permanent member in the UN.

¹³⁴ Alajmi, Zafer, "Gulf Military Cooperation: Tangible Gains or Limited Results," *GCC: Aljazeera center for studies*, March 31, 2014, 47–55, <http://studies.aljazeera.net>.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

2. Economic Soft Power Strategy

Ashraf Kishk, researcher at the Bahrain Centre for Strategic, International, and Energy Studies, argues that, at the international economic level, the Gulf states possess the most important element in the form of oil.¹³⁷ The economy of the United States, the EU, and many other countries depends greatly on the oil of the Gulf States. Therefore, the Gulf states could use it to persuade the United States, the EU, and the other countries to pressure Iran into using its nuclear program for peaceful purposes, which will guarantee the safety and security of the region. In terms of regional economics, there is an enormous commercial exchange between the Gulf states and Iran. The Gulf states comprise the largest commercial market, and Iran benefits a great deal by having them as their main importers. This can be used to force Iran to rethink its nuclear project, either by canceling it, or by carefully using it for peaceful purposes only.¹³⁸

Kishk points out that the economy could be used in negotiations with Iran, as also demonstrated in the commercial benefits between them and Iran. In 2003, the total trade volume between Iran and Kuwait was \$180 million, but in past years, it did not exceed \$40 million. In 2004, the total trade volume between Saudi Arabia and Iran raised to 2 billion Saudi Rial (SR). In 2003, the total volume trade between Bahrain and Iran amounted to \$68 million. Despite the Iranian-Emirati controversy about UAE's islands, the total trade volume between the UAE and Iran reached \$4.4 million in 2003.¹³⁹ This constitutes the equivalent of 13.5 percent of the total volume trade between Iran and the rest of the countries. Moreover, the UAE market is the third most important one for Iran; it is also classified as the fifth country in supplying Iran with goods. Iran is also considered one of the most important markets for the UAE in the field of re-export and import.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Ashraf M. Kishk, "The GCC Vision to the INP (Ro'yat majles alta'wen alkhaleji lel barnameg alnwawi al Erani)," *Albainah*, 2011, 1–5, <http://www.albainah.net>.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

Kishk argues that the Gulf states are capable of influencing the INP, or at least capable of getting the country to provide strong commitments that it will not use its nuclear capacities to produce nuclear weapons. The Gulf states could use their economic power by lowering commercial trade gradually between them and Iran, or by interrupting trade completely, if necessary. By doing so, the Gulf states could apply some pressure on Iran and make it rethink the use of its nuclear capabilities and rethink its desires to dominate the region.¹⁴¹

B. SECOND DIMENSION: CREATING A GULF NUCLEAR PROJECT

It is apparent that Iran is determined to complete its nuclear project under any circumstances, stating that it will use these nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes.¹⁴² President of Iran Ahmadinejad announced that it is Iran's legitimate right to continue its nuclear program for peaceful purposes. Therefore, it is logical that the Gulf states could have their own nuclear programs and nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes, like Iran. It is necessary to create a strategic balance in the region, which could protect the Gulf states from any possible threat or Iran's attempts to dominate and expand in the region. The leaders of the GCC announced that the Arab States of the Gulf started a joint study to create a peaceful nuclear project as a response to Iran's continuation with its nuclear project. The secretary general of the GCC confirmed conducting meetings with officials from the Atomic Energy Agency regarding the Gulf nuclear project.¹⁴³

C. COUNTRIES' POSITIONS TO THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROJECT

The reactions of countries all over the world to the INP have been diverse. Despite the fact that some of these countries, including the Gulf states, declared that Iran has the right to possess nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes only, there is mainly fear of the idea that Iran might be able to possess nuclear weapons. There is also strong

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Althyabi, *Iran and Crab Dancing*, 102–105.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

motivation and desire to stop or stall the INP, or at least guarantee the use of that nuclear power for peaceful purposes only.¹⁴⁴

1. The Gulf States Level

Given common commercial, security and strategic interests, including with Iran, Gulf states should be able to protect themselves or reach a satisfactory accommodation with non-Arab neighbors through cooperation.

–Seale Patrick.¹⁴⁵

Seale Patrick argues that the Gulf states did not address or negotiate directly with Iran regarding its nuclear program.¹⁴⁶ Also, the Gulf states did not try to convince Iran of the necessity of suspending uranium enrichment. However, Iran's pursuit to own nuclear weapons worried the Gulf States, especially after the increase of information about Iran's support and practice of terrorism. Therefore, despite the importance of the commercial trade between the Gulf states and Iran, the Gulf states believe that improving the actual relationship with Iran would not happen until Iran commits not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Gulf states and to respect the Gulf States' sovereignty, independence, and peaceful cohabitation that is obtained from heritage and religion.

The Gulf states considered Iran's occupation of the UAE islands (Abu Musa, and the Greater and the Lesser Tunbs) to be a threat to the security and the stability of the region. Nevertheless, Iran rejected the GCC's statement regarding the three UAE islands, and the Iranian Shura Council issued a declaration considering the UAE islands to be under the sovereignty of Iran. Furthermore, the ministers of the GCC expressed their concern and fear regarding Iran's intention to buy medium-range missiles, which are able to carry chemical warheads, from North Korea. There is also great concern regarding Iranian support of terrorism and its involvement in financing and supporting terrorists organizations in Egypt, Algeria, and other Arab countries. Moreover, the lack of trust in Iran's nuclear intentions has become the Gulf states' nightmare, and they tried to get

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Patrick Seale, "Middle East Needs Dialogue, Not War," *Gulf News*, July 13, 2012, <http://gulfnews.com>.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

guarantees and promises of support from the United States to protect them from the possible threats if Iran proves to possess nuclear weapons. The Gulf states consider the United States to be their strongest ally capable of confronting the INP.¹⁴⁷

Cohen argues the refusal from the Gulf states to adopt a competitive style with Iran that possessed developed military programs in light of the subsistence of the Gulf states suffering from the Iraqi issue and its implications.¹⁴⁸ Iran signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and since 1974 has strongly favored the idea of making of the Middle East a region void of weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore, the IAEA did not find any evidence that proved that the country had breached any obligations of the treaty. Iran agreed to the inspection of Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant by international experts from the IAEA. The country also agreed to put the nuclear power plant under their surveillance and to proceed with international inspections on its nuclear programs in accordance with the same inspections done in Iraq. The IAEA proceeded to inspect the declared Iranian sites, but it also visited two suspected sites twice. In February 1992, the IAEA visited six suspected sites. However, it did not find any trace of activity associated with the production of weapons in that region. The IAEA found that the uranium mine in Saghand's area needed five years to be productive, and that it did not possess uranium enrichment plants. The IAEA also found that the plant of Kalaiya Landmarks in Iran (Maalem Kalaiya) looked like a conference and training center the size of a small hotel, and that the cyclotron given by China could be used for medical purposes only. Iran allowed a new team from the IAEA to visit suspected facilities. This visit did not differ from the last one.¹⁴⁹

During the 26th summit of the GCC held in Abu Dhabi in December 2005, the secretary general expressed the region's fears of Iran's possession of nuclear weapons.¹⁵⁰ He mentioned that the GCC did not wish for a nuclear race in the region. The GCC did

¹⁴⁷ Al-Suwaidi, *Iran and the Gulf*, 143.

¹⁴⁸ Avner Cohen, "Toward a New Middle East: Rethinking the Nuclear Question," *Security Studies Program*, November 1994, <http://web.mit.edu/ssp.pdf>.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Syed Qamar Hasan, "GCC Calls for Nuclear-Free Middle East," *Arab News*, December 20, 2005, <http://www.arabnews.com>.

not issue any statement directly related to the INP; instead, it requested that Israel join the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT), and to expose all of its nuclear facilities to international inspection committees of the IAEA.¹⁵¹ The Gulf states considered the Council's statements regarding the Israel's nuclear power and the concern of the escalation and possible confrontation between Israel and Iran, which will be catastrophic for the entire region. Despite the Gulf states' worry over Iran's possession of nuclear weapons, the states enjoy a good economic and political relationship with Iran.¹⁵²

During the Gulf states' Summit "Jaber" in Riyadh in December 2006, the secretary general of the GCC mentioned the necessity of having the region free of any weapons of mass destruction. The GCC announced that they are not against Iran's possession of nuclear capabilities if used for peaceful purposes. The GCC added that the Gulf states also have the right, just like Iran and Israel, to have their own peaceful nuclear projects.¹⁵³

The closing statement of the 31st Gulf Cooperation Council summit in Abu Dhabi in 2010 ensured that it is essential that the Gulf states show their good intentions towards Iran. Additionally, the GCC statement encouraged the continued negotiations between the West and Teheran to reach a peaceful solution to the INP.¹⁵⁴ Also, the statement ensured the right of all states to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes. Furthermore, the GCC also mentioned utilizing all means to clear the region of any weapons of mass destruction, requesting that Iran respond the international community requests regarding the three UAE islands and start negotiating directly with the GCC to reach a peaceful solution.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

The fears of Gulf states are not devoid of reality given the loss of Iraq as a Sunni Arab bulwark and Iran's consolidating influence there. For the Saudis, nuclear Iran is likely to intensify its Shia ascendancy in Iraq and this sort of development would present an existential threat to Sunni Arab monarchies in the region.

–Umair Jamal¹⁵⁶

Considering all aspects, it is evident that the INP would be very destabilizing to the Gulf states. Nevertheless, the GCC's policies reflect awareness and understanding of the situation and suggest that escalating the situation will not benefit any of the parties involved. Also, Iran must guarantee to use the INP for peaceful purposes,¹⁵⁷ not to mention preserving commercial and economic trade interests between Iran and the Gulf States.¹⁵⁸ The Gulf states can use these points to pressure Iran to solve the problem of the UAE islands and to offer guarantees to ensure the INP for peaceful purposes.¹⁵⁹

2. The Arab Countries Level

All Arab countries that do not belong to the Gulf region are against Iran's possession of weapons of mass destruction, except the Palestinian Authority, which chose to be neutral. Egypt's position was that Iran does not face any threats that could justify possessing nuclear weapons, and furthermore that such possession might affect the balance of power in the region.¹⁶⁰ In addition are the serious risks to which the Gulf states are exposed if a radiation leak occurred through incompetence, negligence, or destruction by airstrikes from Israel or coalition forces.¹⁶¹

Arab League Secretary General Amre Moussa met 300 students at a Doha Debates Special Occasion on November 2006 in which the League called for keeping the

¹⁵⁶ Umair Jamal, "The Iranian Nuclear Program: Impact on Regional Stability and Security," *International Relations*, September 4, 2014, <http://www.e-ir.info>.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Elliot M. Jeffrey, *Third World 88/89* (Guilford, CT: Dushkin Pub. Group, 1988), 98.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

region of the Middle East clear from nuclear weapons.¹⁶² Moreover, the League took serious steps toward doing so and created an Arab Peace and Security Council, in addition to taking measures to organize and promote Arab national security. All the Arab countries, including Iran and Turkey, agreed to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region. Furthermore, the Arab League stated that Iran has the right to possess nuclear capabilities to be used for peaceful purposes only, like any other country of the region. Many analysts argue that, because the Arab position rejects the INP, it follows that all Arab countries are aware of the risks resulting from the program. The presence of nuclear weapons in the region can form an imminent danger for the Gulf States, which will influence the U.S. and EU interests in the region.¹⁶³

3. The International Level

Wexler argues that the countries' positions diverged.¹⁶⁴ However, they all agreed, except for Israel, on the completion of INP for peaceful purposes, providing strong guarantees. Turkey was not opposed to the peaceful INP. However, it feared, just like the Gulf states, that Iran might create nuclear weapons. Israel rejects the project, be it for peaceful or military purposes, and it opposed the completion of the INP, considering it a direct source of danger and a threat to security. Thus, Israel has carefully thought about directing air strikes to Iranian nuclear facilities.

On the other hand, the United States and the EU continued their rejection for Iran's possession of nuclear capacities, but that position was reversed recently by the G6 or the G5+1 Summit on November 24, 2013. The new decision was for allowing Iran to continue its nuclear project under the condition that it will use its nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes only.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² "Doha Debate Special Event: Amre Moussa," *The Doha Debates member of Qatar Foundation*, October 29, 2006, accessed May 19, 2015, <http://www.thedohadebates.com/debates/item/index14be.html#222>.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Wexler, "Israel and Iran."

¹⁶⁵ Kelsey Davenport, "History of Official Proposals on the Iranian Nuclear Issue," *Arms Control Association*, January, 2014, <https://www.armscontrol.org>.

D. PREVIOUS EFFORTS TAKEN BY THE UNITED STATES TO PREVENT THE COMPLETION OF THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROJECT

Dima Adamsky argues that from 1992 to 2000, the United States attempted several times to stall or stop the INP using different political means.¹⁶⁶ For example, after Russia signed the agreement with Iran to complete the Bushehr nuclear reactor, the United States warned Russia to stop cooperation with a troubled country that supports and practices terrorism. Also, during a visit from Russian president Boris Yeltsin to Washington in 1994, the United States pressured Yeltsin to declare that Russia will stop its arms sales to Tehran, except for the sales that had already been agreed upon in concluded contracts.¹⁶⁷ In addition, the United States hindered Iran's attempts to buy rare nuclear materials from Kazakhstan. The United States bought the entire factory stock of beryllium sufficient for manufacturing twenty nuclear warheads. The United States continuously warned Russia about the need to cancel the nuclear reactor agreements with Iran. Moreover, the United States pressured Britain, France, Argentina, Brazil, and India not to deal with Iran in the nuclear field. Indeed, India stopped its sale of nuclear reactors to Iran, which was supposed to be placed in the Bushehr station. The United States continued to pressure Russia until it pledged to cancel its arms deal with Iran, and China until it signed a declaration to stop its nuclear cooperation with Iran. The United States also hindered several Iranian nuclear transactions, such as the Iran's purchase of a device from Argentina that transforms uranium into highly enriched uranium; that deal was never completed. The United States also imposed sanctions on some Russian companies that helped Iran in the development of its program to create missiles capable of carrying nuclear and chemical warheads.¹⁶⁸

The researcher observes that the change of the U.S. and the EU strategy regarding the INP and agreeing for peaceful purposes may lead only to calm the situation in the Gulf region in the near future. But in the long term, the program's outcomes, threats, and impact to the region are unpredictable. In light of the existing race to obtain nuclear

¹⁶⁶ Dima Adamsky, Karim Sadjadpour, and Diane De Gramont, "The War over Containing Iran," *Foreign Affairs*, February 20, 2011, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com>.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

capabilities for peaceful purposes, Gulf states and Arab countries are convinced that the possession of nuclear capacities leads to the production of nuclear weapons. This may lead to an increase of nuclear weapons in the region of the Arab Gulf and the Middle East, which will possibly raise tensions in the region and exchange of threats among its countries.

E. THE OBSTACLES LIMITING THE GULF STATES' EFFORTS TO FACE THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROJECT

The Gulf states have come to see Iran's nuclear program as the shield that allows Iran's sword its proxies, ideological and religious appeal, and propaganda efforts to penetrate the Arab world.

—Dina Esfandiary, Elham Fakhro, and Becca Wasser¹⁶⁹

Esfandiary, Fakhro, and Wasser argue that the Gulf states are faced with political and economic constraints that might obstruct their attempts to stop the INP, or at least to have guarantees that the INP will be used peacefully, especially, after the approval of the G6 or G5+1 in November 2013, that Iran can use the INP for peaceful purposes.¹⁷⁰

1. Political Constraints

Basma Saeed argues that the Gulf states are faced with several political constraints that obstruct its success in dealing with the INP.¹⁷¹ The first of these constraints is the lack of political dialogue between Iran and the Gulf states, which is necessary to convince Iran to refrain from completing the INP, in addition to the lack of actual guarantees that Iran will use it for peaceful purposes. In addition, there is insufficient focus during the international forums on the importance of making the region free from weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, the weakness of the Gulf states' policies and their hesitation support the previous U.S. and the EU policy's aim to strip Iran of its nuclear capabilities. Some of the Gulf states note that Iran has the right to

¹⁶⁹ Dina Esfandiary, Elham Fakhro, and Becca Wasser, "Obstacles for the Gulf States," *Arms Control Association*, September 1, 2011, <http://legacy.armscontrol.org>.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Basma Mubarak, "Oman, Iranian Rapprochement and a GCC Union," *Al Jazeera Center for Studies*, May 2014, <http://studies.aljazeera.net>.

possess nuclear capabilities, just like Israel, and that the Gulf states have the right to possess nuclear capabilities as well. Hence, the Gulf states are unable to take a clear, joint political stand regarding the INP. In addition, the Gulf states are reluctant to engage in military confrontations with Iran.¹⁷²

Iranian leaders declared egotistically that they will attack the UAE if it spoke of the three islands problem again, and referred to Bahrain as the 14th province of Iran.¹⁷³ Iran also harbors ambitions to expand and colonize the entire region and revive the Persian Empire. Iran threatened Saudi Arabia that has constituted an Islamic Council to manage the pilgrimage (Hajj) affairs, which Saudis have been managing for almost 13 centuries and which occur every year within Saudi Arabia in Makah and Medina. There is a lack of political willingness among the Gulf states to impose gradual economic sanctions and decrease commercial trading with Iran, which might pressure Iran to stop the INP or offers strong guarantees that the project will not be used to create nuclear weapons. Althyabi notes that there is a shortage of integrated coordination among the Gulf states through the GCC and the Arab League to agree to policies that will permit Iran to possess nuclear capacities without clashing with the international and regional variables. There is also an absence of a common Arab course of action to prioritize the Arab issues and support open dialogue among the Arab states, which will support trust and cooperation between them and create a sense of a common national strategy to protect Arab interests.¹⁷⁴ In addition, the Gulf states are not quite able to create security policies for the Gulf. If they do, the region can deal appropriately with any hostile security policies, if needed, for the purpose of having the highest measures of national security through determining the sources of threats and the means to confront them. Furthermore, the Gulf states have no joint military force policy in place, or military cooperation. This constraint may result in the emergence of a security vacuum that allows an external intervention in the Gulf region.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, for some Arab countries, the

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Althyabi, *Iran and Crab Dancing*, 164–70.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

relationship with the United States has been affected negatively as a result of U.S. support to the Arab Uprising or the Arab Spring revolutions that have shaken the security and the stability of the Arab countries. The revolutions also provoked dangerous disturbances and divisions, which had an important impact on the closeness between the United States and Iran and the approval of the G5 members of the Security Council, in addition to Germany, for Iran to continue INP for peaceful purposes.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore is the loss of Iraq's political influence after its destruction, occupation, and exposure to attempts of division. This reduced the country's role in promoting national security of the Gulf states and to their ability to confront the Iranian influence in the region, or to offer support and protection to neighboring Gulf states. Another serious political constraint is Iran's policy of exporting violence and terrorism through the exploitation of the Shiite minorities residing in the Gulf states. Iran might use the Shiite minority groups to shake the security and stability of the region and make the Gulf states preoccupied with their internal affairs, therefore no longer requesting any action against the INP.¹⁷⁷

The researcher notes that the political constraints limit the success of the Gulf states' efforts in facing the INP. On the contrary, it participates in the completion of the Iranian project, especially after the approval of the world power on the continuation of the project, which will increase the possibility of threats from Iran. Therefore, the Gulf states must positively cooperate and acquire a greater sense of solidarity to face the issue.

2. Economic Constraints

There are also economic constraints that limit the success of the Gulf states' efforts to confront the INP directly. Basma Saeed argues that one of these constraints is the inability of the Gulf states to complete each other and form a joint economic power that could be the foundation for economic and social powers capable of achieving total economic supremacy. "Growing differences between GCC countries on a number of issues make it difficult to imagine that a union would succeed."¹⁷⁸ Having this unified

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Mubarak, "Oman, Iranian Rapprochement," 1.

economic power might prevent Iran from assaulting the region. Economic power offers immunity, not unlike military power. A great example of economic power is Japan, which has economic international power, and no military force of any country can assault it.¹⁷⁹

Kishk points out the dependence of the Gulf economy on the Iranian economy and its association with it, as the terms of trade are doubling between the Gulf states and Iran.¹⁸⁰ This has a direct impact on the conflicting situations of the Gulf states from those who are for or against Iran's possession of nuclear capabilities. Moreover, most Gulf states are not using diversity regarding their economy and main source of income; they have only one source—oil—which will end one day or may be stopped as a result war. The author argues that the Gulf states are not able to create a suitable environment for diversifying the local industry and controlling it nationally.¹⁸¹

Kishk aims to identify a lack of economic cooperation among the Gulf states because their economic policies are unable to achieve a balanced economic and social development. Also, there is hardly any commercial trading within the Gulf states, but there is an increase in commercial trading with Iran. In addition, there is a decline in the international Arab competitiveness due to the world's major power policy against Arab products.¹⁸²

John Miglietta argues that the Gulf states are very concerned about the consequences and impacts of any military action against Iran.¹⁸³ If military action would take place against Iran, the entire region, including the Gulf states, could possibly be destroyed and suffer catastrophe. Also, the region will suffer destruction of its economic capacities. For example, as retaliation, Iran might try to stop the export of Gulf oil to the United States and Western Europe by closing off the Gulf region and targeting passing

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Kishk, "The GCC Vision," 5.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ John P. Miglietta, *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945–1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2002), 255.

ships. This would result in lack of food, supplies, and medicine in the Gulf states, which might affect security, stability, and prices. In short, the region would suffer multiple crises from the rise of criminal activities. Moreover, if this war lasted for a long time, then the Gulf economy would collapse and the region might reverse to its developmental stages.¹⁸⁴

The researcher notes that these economic constraints limit the Gulf states from confronting the INP; on the contrary, these economic constraints might help Iran complete its project. This is due to the Gulf states' fear of Iranian military power, the unpredicted Iranian leaders, and their abilities to incite war in the region. Eruption of a war will definitely negatively impact the Gulf states and destroy their oil-based economy. Iran is aware of that, and it is its winning card if it decides to prevent the Gulf's oil exportation. Therefore, the best strategy to stop the INP, or to at least have guarantees that it will be used for peaceful purposes only, is that the Gulf states gradually lessen commercial trade with Iran and reach the point of blocking the commercial trade as an economic pressure strategy.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

V. OUTCOME OF THE STUDY AND VIEWS ON CONFRONTING THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROJECT

When dealing with Iran, any collective Gulf strategy vision to oppose the INP will necessarily call on Gulf states to deploy soft influence of political and economic strategies by promoting closer ties with Iran. This starts a new chapter of political dialogue aimed at persuading Iran to realize the risks of its nuclear weapons program that will destabilize the security of the Gulf. Moreover, Gulf states may also deploy their soft leverage in other economic fields, focusing mainly on the idea that Iran's possession of nuclear weapons will ultimately threaten the oil fields, which may halt oil exports to the United States and the European Union.¹⁸⁵ Another aspect that should be considered comprehensively is enforced economic sanctions, which would either suspend the INP altogether or assure peaceful utilization of the program. Such aspects might push Iran to reconsider its nuclear program.

A. FAILURE TO STEP UP SANCTIONS ENFORCEMENT ON IRAN

The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise (AICE) mentions that all states demand that Iran be prohibited from owning nuclear arms. The global mission of halting Iranian development in the field is focused around a strong and widespread range of endorsements that aim to confine Iran's economy.¹⁸⁶ The Gulf states offer feelings of respect towards the demands of the United Nations Security Council sanctions, but they have understandably hesitated to breach any legal obligations. By reducing the state's accessible resources and centering its cost-benefit analysis on moderation, sanctions would play a vital role in regional policy with Tehran.¹⁸⁷ Modern studies advise a rather Draconian stance in the Middle East, a hotspot for Iranian offshore financing and re-

¹⁸⁵ Alireza Nader, *Iran after the Bomb: How Would a Nuclear Armed Tehran Behave* (RAND Report No. RR310) (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013), <http://www.rand.org.pdf>.

¹⁸⁶ "Fact Sheets: The Failure of Sanctions against Iran," *American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise (AICE)*, July 1, 2015, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org>.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

exports. Ultimately, more measures should be taken to communicate to Tehran that its possibilities of evading or mitigating sanctions will be scarce.¹⁸⁸

B. FAILURE TO ADDRESS DOMESTIC COMPLAINTS WITHIN THE GULF STATES

Laurence Louer says Iran's primary methods of asserting its dominance in the Gulf typically involved the intimidation of restless minority groups, especially Shi'a, to fund militants in neighboring countries, rather than the practice of direct military exercise.¹⁸⁹ Essentially, Iran's ability to assemble the disenfranchised people within Gulf states is the foremost hazard these countries are confronted with. Therefore, each of these states has devoted substantial amounts of time towards strengthening infrastructure security and further devices to dull future threats. The Gulf regimes' new optimistic attitude toward their Shia citizens ought to denote equal attention to their prospective social and political susceptibilities. The question of integrating foreign employee dissects into the community atmosphere of the Gulf in a more sustainable manner should be treated as well.¹⁹⁰

C. IMPROVEMENT OF REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION

According to Suzanne Maloney, the history of the GCC includes deliberate military developments as well as political reform meant to galvanize a common guard.¹⁹¹ Though internal feuds on the series of national security dilemmas have limited the procedure to date, Gulf states have pushed for intensified teamwork among the states of the Arabian Peninsula. farther expand abilities for more arranged defense planning and reaction to the series of possibility passive active efforts, a nuclear Iran might assume the

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Louër Laurence, "The Limits of Iranian Influence among Gulf Shi'a," *Combating Terrorism Center (CTC)*, May 15, 2009, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu>.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Suzanne Maloney, "Thinking the Unthinkable: The Gulf States and the Prospect of a Nuclear Iran," *Saban Center for Middle East Policy*, January, 2013, <http://www.brookings.edu.pdf>.

situation in its right. It is, therefore, important to note that Gulf states have done little to think creatively about mitigating vulnerabilities.¹⁹²

D. FAILURE TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A POLICY OF PROLONGED INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY DETERRENCE

Joseph Pilat and Nathan Busch address that to shield against the prospect of a nuclear Iran requires the pronouncement of a logical approach of deterrence.¹⁹³ Gulf states have failed to design a comprehensive policy not only to prevent Iran's nuclear program, also to deter any negative outcomes when Iranian nuclear accomplishment, such as the possibility of an Israeli attack or the invitation for Gulf states to start nuclear research.¹⁹⁴

E. BLURRED DIPLOMACY WITH TEHRAN

Gulf state policy alternatives on Iran, as these states are most directly influenced by Iranian nuclear activity, must not be partial to ignoring the circumstances or to argument. To a certain extent, Gulf states should be induced to step up and promote thinking outside of the box to solve their security threats. It is worth noting that Gulf States, without doubt, adhere to an Iran free of nuclear power, but they are reluctant to presume the cost of negotiation with Iran. Though it is reasonable that the current Iranian policies, confrontational in nature, would make it politically unpleasant to negotiate with the state, a lack of direct dialog has worked to the obstruction of the Gulf states.¹⁹⁵

F. IMPLICATIONS AND OPTIONS FOR THE GULF STATES

Maloney argues that current discussion by most U.S leaders has requested to do a process with abstruseness in Iran regarding the ramifications of nuclear weapons acquisition.¹⁹⁶ Such indications may be expounding the vicissitudes of its actions towards

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Joseph F. Pilat and Nathan E. Busch, *Routledge Handbook of Nuclear Proliferation and Policy* (Hoboken, NJ: Taylor and Francis, 2015), 6–7.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Avraham Sela, *The Continuum Political Encyclopedia of the Middle East* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 396.

¹⁹⁶ Maloney, "Thinking the Unthinkable," 19–20.

Tehran. In addition, the unambiguous Israeli vows to use force to prevent Iran from crossing the nuclear threshold carry a regrettable side effect states like India and Pakistan that breached their nuclear threshold, or those prevented from acquiring such arms, like South Africa, are obligated to obfuscate their programs and evade affirmation or testing or risk terminating international partnerships and respect.¹⁹⁷

Maloney points out that Iran's determination to invest in its nuclear program to negotiate, despite the threat of devastating economic weight and the cautionary words, commands thoughtful acknowledgement of a threat more serious than Tehran's mere expansion of nuclear hedging.¹⁹⁸ The basics of a reply to such a scenario, for the Gulf states, should not change considerably from the way to handling an Iran that has collective breakthrough power, but has decided not to arm itself.¹⁹⁹ Though the predicament following breakout for Iran's neighbors and for the international arena is direr, it will require a similar, but more urgent display of demands to improve the existing agenda for putting off Iran. One central peculiarity between an implied Iranian nuclear ability and an Iranian nuclear armory includes issues of uncertainty; Achievement and use of nuclear weapons would decisively reduce Iran's ideal policy of vagueness and equivocation.

No matter what the confines of the intelligence services of the Middle East countries that believe Iran's nuclear activities a primary warning, Iran cannot hope to clandestinely hold a nuclear arsenal.²⁰⁰ Maloney explains that this sort of transparency comes with certain benefits, as any clear sign of a nuclear arsenal, capable of being noted through tests, or declarations would overwhelmingly undermine Iran's chosen position of rejection and dishonesty and would aggravate violent and almost world international convictions. Iran might be incapable of playing to the lingering caginess of world powers. This change in height and political and trade relations would be overwhelmingly

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

challenging for a state already staggering from loneliness and economic stress.²⁰¹ Therefore, the foremost calculated inference of confirmed Iranian weaponization for the Gulf states would be the noticeably amplified possibility of state-border military action. With this comes the equivalent need to prepare for direct engagement, eventuality planning and alleviation of possible counter-effects upon infrastructure and civilian disset, and to measure diplomatic and security requirements necessary to deal with a post-strike Iran. As they are prone to immediate contact with Iran, the Gulf states would gain an advantage through collaborating to strategy for the next period of Iran's volatile political progression.²⁰²

Maloney argues that it is still possible to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear arms, and it is desirable for states to follow through in their efforts to prevent such an event. However, Iran's determined quest of its nuclear desires over dozens of years despite international risks, along with past models that extrapolate that a ruler curved on passing the nuclear doorstep will succeed, demands that the states that would suffer the most philosophical nuclear damage from Iran plan for the worst-possible-outcomes.²⁰³ The olden times of the Cold War demonstrates the limited produce of nuclear nastiness. Dynamic and entrepreneurial, Gulf states have to prosper even under ambiguous security surroundings.²⁰⁴

**G. THE PRESENCE OF THE SHIITE CRESCENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST:
A RADICAL DESTABILIZATION THREAT BY THE
REVOLUTIONARY IRAN AGAINST GULF STATES**

Ozdin points out that, following the U.S. invasion in Iraq in 2003, Shiite expansionism from Iran appeared significantly in the Arabian Peninsula.²⁰⁵ King Abdullah of Jordon announced the dangers of the "Shiite crescent" in December 2004, which spreads from Damascus to Tehran to Baghdad.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid., 21.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ozdin, "From Shiite Crescent to Full Moon."

Noting that Iran's nuclear deal may upset the equilibrium of power in the region and exacerbate sectarian's tightness, *The Economist* proceeds to discuss Iran economy, political and military support to its proxies from Levant to southern Arabian peninsula.²⁰⁶ Zalmay Khalilzad, U.S. Ambassador of the U.N. under President Bush argued that "Iran is stronger today because of the U.S.-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq." The assault of Iraq has severely altered the Middle East in unpredictable manners. In fact, it helped Iran become the winner in the region, as Iraq was the only competitor to Iran from the Arab world (especially after the eight years' war).²⁰⁷ Iran geographical fortune is characterized by the Persian Empire history that will complete luring the Iranian ambitions in its regional interests and its foreign policy. Therefore, nuclear dialogue between Iran and the U.S. has nourished Iranian expansion. Iran has worked in the growth of Syria for the past four years, using Hezbollah militia in Syria along with members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, captured or killed by the Syrian Free Army. Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasr Allah said that "We were where we needed to be, and we will be where we must be; we believe that this is not just the battle of the Syrian people, it is defending ourselves: Syria, Lebanon and the entire region." In conclusion, the collapse of the Saddam's regime in Iraq let the formation of Shiite militias to appear and strengthen within the country, while facing a battle against ISIS. These militias, along with the Iraqi Army, are fighting under Iranian influence and coordination, specifically by Qassem Suleimani, chief of Iran's elite al-Quds branch of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. Such threats towards Saudi Arabia must be eliminated in order to stabilize the region from any radical movements and activities.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

H. KING SALMAN'S PROPOSAL OF ESTABLISHING A UNIFIED ARAB MILITARY FORCE

Shibley Telhami argues that, despite other states' projections, the Arab domain has never been characterized for its harmony.²⁰⁹ In fact, Arab leaders' idea to establish a joint military force should be credited to Saudi Arabian foreign policy as a major achievement. However, all Arab leaders stressed such a decision as the President of Egypt encouraged it. Such allied force is a result of the continuous serious threats facing the Arab world. Recently, Saudi Arabia is indubitably responsible for much of the religious radicalism in the contemporary Arab world. The Saudis have combined their financial power to become the largest weapons importer in the world as of 2015. After decades of hoarding its modern arsenal, Saudi Arabia has used its power to return its kidnapped neighboring country, Yemen, in Operation Decisive Storm, that has the most international rightfulness and support by most of the world leading powers. Operation Decisive Storm consists of an alliance of at least ten countries in a fight against a Shiite rebellious militia, the Houthies, supported by Iran. In 2013, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain proposed in the GCC annual convention the expansion of GCC to add the Arab world's remaining monarchies, Jordan and Morocco. This would create an undefeatable force against the possible insurgencies occurring in the region. Egypt, on the other hand, shall profit a great deal in such a process, where it has, guaranteed, billions of dollars in Saudi aid to rely on, and therefore an elevated military role in the Middle East stability.²¹⁰

Gedalyah Reback argues that, as Arab Spring uprisings appeared in 2011, the Saudi regime deemed itself invulnerable, even after Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's immediate tumble from power.²¹¹ The Saudi leadership's confidence was later questioned by a collection of frightened actions of some neighboring countries and strong allies. Factually, the most effective Arab steps arrived with a Saudi-Egyptian alliance in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. Although Egyptian and Syrian troops fought together, Saudis

²⁰⁹ Shibley Telhami, "Arab Nations Just Created a Joint Military Force. Why Now?" *Reuters*, April 2, 2015, <http://blogs.reuters.com>.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Gedalyah Reback, "Saudi Arabia's 'United Arab Army' Aimed at Iran, Not Israel," *Israel National News*, March 30, 2015, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com>.

and Algerians held a vital role in economics and politics, as oil was an essential weapon. Nowadays, the Saudis oppose instant action in Yemen. Though Saudi Arabia's responsibility is courageous and novel, no one can underestimate the challenges ahead, especially if ground forces are eventually needed and attacks from Yemen on Saudi territory expand. This should bring Saudi Arabia to a point where it is finally capable militarily. Because Saudi Arabia is considered the world's main importer of arms, several nations view the Saudi military as crucial to providing military stability to the area. The Saudi military role is not yet revealed, because Saudi Arabia doesn't want to be without political or military fighting support. Meanwhile, after the fall of the Eastern gate of the Arab world, along with the neglected Iraqi Sunnis, Iraq has been an active ally of Iran's. Yet Yemen has been facing the same strategy by Iran, which threatens Saudi's borders, as it is considered the Southern gate of Saudi Arabia borders. Saudi concerns about Iran are not just limited to being a direct military one, or INP. In fact, the Saudis do not wish Iran to gain nuclear arms: Saudi Arabia's major concern is Iran's expansion of its radical falsified Islamic and political power in Arab regions. This rivalry is not limited to religious backgrounds, but it threateningly impairs sectarianism in that Saudis are concerned with the growth of Iranian-backed Shiite Arabs. On the other hand, after the fall of some countries during the Arab Spring, intensifying sectarianism has given Radical Islamists more recruits capabilities that target the Gulf monarchies as enemies within.²¹²

Reback says that the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL), or so-called ISIS, served as a wake-up call for Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries because ISIS's focus is on replacing the Arab regimes with ambiguous fates. Another serious case that is worth presenting in this research is the Syrian issue. Saudi Arabia is torn between despising ISIS and its contempt for President Bashar al-Assad. Alternatively, the Egyptian-Saudi military and political cooperation faces another threat: the negotiation between Iran and the international arena, which Arab rulers dread will enlarge Iran's impact at their cost. However, the joint Arab force may face greater obstacles, such as insurgency or failed

²¹² Ibid.

states.²¹³ As the joint Arab force moves towards its reformation, more political and economic means are required to be accomplished prior to the unification of the military powers. Hence, in conclusion, the joint Arab force's main potential is not facing Iran, Israel, or Western powers. In fact, it is essentially aiming to halt the insurgencies within the Arab world.

I. SAUDI ARABIA'S STRATEGIC DECISION TO OWN NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Mohammed H. Amir mentions that Dr. Abdulla Al-Askar a member of the Saudi Arabian Foreign Affairs Committee of Shura council, points out that Saudi Arabia is one of the most influential countries in the Middle East.²¹⁴ Owning a nuclear weapon is not far distant for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia but is part of a strategic perspective to dominate peace and harmony among the world throughout the Islamic behavior, as it is the land of Islam. In such regards, a member of the Saudi Arabian Foreign Affairs Committee of Shura Council, Dr. Abdulla Al-Askar, argues in his article that the Saudi Arabia government agreed to the terms of the nuclear deal between Iran and the West. Al-Askar mentions that, as long as Iran gains the right to launch its nuclear program, then it is possible for Egypt and Saudi Arabia having nuclear programs in the Middle East, depending on the political decisions. He also mentions that he is not concerned about Tehran having the nuclear program under agreed-upon conditions, but his concern is about the failure of Tehran to obligate to the conditions, since it is known to be a rogue, sectarian, and knowledgeable about the quirks.²¹⁵

Al-Askar points out that once Iran gains the right to operate its nuclear program and the international sanctions are dropped, it is expected to fund the Shiite terrorist groups, causing unrest in the region, as noticed in the past four years in the Arabian Gulf region. On the other hand, the United States has assured the Gulf states that the agreement will not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon, while the Arab states are calling

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Mohammed H. Amir, "Saudi Will Develop Similar to Iran's Nuclear Program," *ALWATAN*, July 16, 2015, <http://www.elwatannews.com>.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

upon stripping Israel of its nuclear weapon and increasing its scientific capacity to oppose the Iranian nuclear power. Saudi Arabia has the scientific, material, educational, and financial capacity required to develop a nuclear program, as Russia signed agreements on such purposes. Moreover, Saudi Arabia has been developing its nuclear program infrastructure for the past twenty years by sending missions to Europe and nuclear energy countries in all branches.²¹⁶

Finally, Al-Askar concludes that once the agreement has been signed, Iran has sixty days to announce its final position of the agreement, which is committing to the international decision of not developing nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, the Arab states are prepared for the INP developments, as they are ready to launch their nuclear programs once political decisions are considered.²¹⁷

Yaroslav Trofimov argues that President Obama sees a strategic target behind the agreement, as the Saudis are making strategic decisions to possess nuclear weapons in the near future in order to equalize threats in the region.²¹⁸ Saudi Arabia has decided to purchase nuclear weapons from Pakistan to match up with the Middle Eastern nuclear race. In fact, this would prompt Egypt and Turkey to step into the nuclear race.²¹⁹ In addition, the newspaper adds that former Saudi Arabia's foreign affairs minister said that "anything Iran has would be available for us too." The United States has reinforced its eligibility to protect the GCC as close allies of Washington. On the other hand, French President François Hollande stresses that Iran must comply with the agreement and shall never possess the nuclear weapon in the final agreement. He adds that the initial weapons equilibrium agreement does not grant Iran the right to possess nuclear weapons, because the financial sanctions have been partially raised, and that such agreement shall not disturb the region's stability.²²⁰

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Yaroslav Trofimov, "Saudi Arabia Considers Nuclear Weapons to Offset Iran," The Wall Street Journal, May 7, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/saudi-arabia>.

²¹⁹ Ibid

²²⁰ Ibid.

Trofimov stresses that his country will always remain loyal to its allies and protects their interests with power, if needed. Meanwhile, a great debate has been argued that Saudi Arabia has acquired Chinese nuclear weapons, has financed a nuclear weapons program in Pakistan, and has begun building a nuclear program. Prince Turki al-Faisal said, "If Iran acquires nuclear weapons, Saudi Arabia will possess nuclear weapons." In 2003, several sources confirmed that Saudi Arabia has three options towards the nuclear weapons: first, to ally itself with a country that has nuclear weapons; second, to get rid of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, including in Israel and Iran; and third, to own a Saudi nuclear program.²²¹ In fact, Saudi Arabia is the only Arab country to have a military force, known as the Royal Saudi Strategic Missile Force, which aims to defeat any nuclear threat, as the kingdom is against possessing nuclear weapons in the Middle East and signed a treaty on limiting the spread of nuclear weapons and supporting a nuclear-free zone.²²² In 2008, Saudi Arabia signed an agreement with the United States to build a civilian nuclear program in Saudi Arabia to serve peaceful matters. This program was supported by Pakistan, as the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan is considered strong. This program was initiated earlier to oppose the Israeli nuclear program, as the Indian nuclear program has been considered a threat to the Islamic world.²²³

The Pakistani nuclear program was initially funded by Saudi Arabia in 1974. The Prime Minister of Pakistan declared in a visit to Saudi Arabia in 1980, "Our achievement is yours," referring to the nuclear weapons program. Then, in 1998, Nawaz Sharif thanked Saudi Arabia for supporting his country after the successful nuclear tests. This triggered Western communities to suspect that Pakistan would sell nuclear heads and nuclear technologies to Saudi Arabia, but Saudi Arabia denied such allegations.²²⁴

In 1990, Saudi Arabia purchased 60 ballistic missiles from China capable of carrying nuclear warheads. In 2102, an agreement was signed between Saudi Arabia and

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

China on mutual cooperation in the nuclear energy field to support the peaceful nuclear programs between the countries. In 2015, Saudi Arabia finally signed an agreement with South Korea to build two nuclear reactors for \$2 billion over twenty years, including research and development, training, and construction. This agreement has been discussed for the past four years in order to grant Saudi Arabia a nuclear infrastructure for its newly built research reactors. In addition, by 2030, Saudi Arabia will possess sixteen nuclear reactors capable of producing nuclear weapons if circumstances force it to do so, being surrounded by Israel and Iranian nuclear powers. In this regards, Pakistan has stressed that the security of Saudi Arabia is mutual to Pakistan, as they are considered one country, and any threat to Saudi Arabia is a threat to Pakistan.²²⁵

Trofimov mentions that Saudi is capable of possessing nuclear warheads from Pakistan at any time. In addition, Gary Samore, President Barak Obama's advisor said, "thinks that Saudi Arabia has an understanding with Pakistan that Pakistan, in extreme cases, will give the Saudi nuclear weapons."²²⁶ On March 30, 2015, former Saudi ambassador in Washington, Adel al-Jubeir said that the United States announced that Saudi Arabia will build its own nuclear program and would build a nuclear bomb to counter the Iranian military nuclear program, stressing that it does not negotiate on the doctrine of the kingdom and its security, following the decline of uranium transferred to Russia within 24 hours of the deadline for the end of the agreement.²²⁷ Moreover, it is important to mention that Saudi Arabia possesses two types of middle-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads and high explosives, produced in 1971 and used only in China and Saudi Arabia. These missiles are called Eastern Winds coded by DF-3. These missiles, including Shaheen missiles, range up to 900 kilometers and were developed in Pakistan. They are capable of carrying nuclear warheads.²²⁸

Finally, in regards to the Saudi Arabian missile platforms, satellite images taken in July 2013 found signs indicating that one is pointing to the northwest towards Tel

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

Aviv, and the second platform to the northeast toward Tehran. Al-Saleel base is considered the first ballistic missile facility in Saudi Arabia, built in 1987, 450 km north of Riyadh. Other missile bases are to be mentioned, such as base 511, about 70–90 km south of Riyadh; base 533; base 566, about 750 km from the northwest of Riyadh; base 544; and base 522 in the valley of Dowasser.²²⁹

J. HISTORIC DEAL REACHED OVER IRAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM

The United States and other world powers reached a historic agreement with Iran here Tuesday, aimed at preventing the Islamic republic from building a nuclear weapon in return for the lifting of sanctions that have isolated the country and hobbled its economy.

—Carol Morello and Karen DeYoung²³⁰

Morello and DeYoung argue that the INP agreement has played a massive role in the West as the Middle East faces aftershocks from the Arab Spring. After several years of arguments over the program, Iran finally succeeded in raising economic sanctions, along with gaining the conditional agreement of possessing the nuclear program.²³¹ After the announcement of the agreement in Vienna on Tuesday, July 13, 2015, President Obama saw this deal as an achievement for American diplomacy that may change the world. In fact, he said that this conditional agreement will ensure that Iran shall have no possibility of achieving a nuclear weapons program for at least the next decade. “Every pathway to a nuclear weapon is cut off,” Obama said.²³²

The conditional agreement includes the limitation of Iran’s nuclear capability and imposing strict international monitoring in exchange for lifting international economic sanctions. Such conditions, according to senior administration officials, would make the world more secure. On the other hand, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, John A. Boehner, disagreed with the decision, saying, “If, in fact, it’s as bad a deal as I think it is at this moment, we’ll do everything that we can to stop it.” President Obama ignored

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Carol Morello and Karen DeYoung, “Historic Deal Reached with Iran to Limit Nuclear Program,” *Washington Post*, July 14, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com>.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

such claims and carried on with his decision. In addition, the agreement will not be effective until Iran is certified by the IAEA as having met its requirements.²³³

Several analysts among from the U.S. allies have been concerned about the agreement, though President Obama assured them that the agreement of the Iranian nuclear program shall not be harmful for the region. The Arabian Gulf, however, believes that lifting sanctions would increase Iran's efforts to expand its powers creating terroristic chaos. On the other hand, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had another perspective, that Iran would not only get a nuclear weapon out of the agreement, but also continue support terrorism once sanctions are gone. Moreover, senior U.S. administration officials affirmed that, until Iranian compliance is verified, an interim agreement restricting Iran's nuclear activities and sanctions will remain in place.²³⁴ Iranian President Hassan Rouhani predicted that Iran's relations with the world would change only if the agreement was implemented in a rightful procedure. There was no immediate public comment from Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as Iranian officials have long claimed that the capability to possess a nuclear program would benefit Iran with energy and medical applications.²³⁵

K. THE STANDPOINT OF THE GULF STATES TOWARD THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROJECT AGREEMENT

Ahmad Taleb argues that the INP agreement carries tough considerations and concerns for members of the GCC, as "the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and Germany reached a nuclear deal," which promises enhanced relationships between the West and Iran that may hide more unsteadiness of the Middle East region in the future.²³⁶ The Israeli prime minister described the agreement as a historic mistake.²³⁷ Nowadays, Saudi Arabia and members of GCC seem to adopt rigid

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ahmad Taleb, "What Does the Iran Nuclear Deal Mean for the GCC?" *Global Risk Insights (GRI)*, July 22, 2015, <http://globalriskinsights.com>.

²³⁷ Ibid.

situations “regarding different issues in the Middle East and towards Iranian policy.”²³⁸ This can be obtained from the official statements about Iranian involvement in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq.²³⁹

Gulf states nowadays are preparing for the upcoming storm of the Iranian economy that may lessen the tension in the Middle East. In other words, the Arab countries seem pessimistic regarding the Iranian nuclear agreement as the West finds it optimistic to “open a new page with Iran and elaborate fresh regional policies that are based on cooperation and compromise rather than clash and tension.”²⁴⁰

L. CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The Gulf states need to understand that Iran is highly capable of producing its own nuclear weapons. Additionally, Iran seeks to make nuclear weapons deterrents against neighboring Gulf states and Israel in order to safeguard its security and achieve its expansionist policy. Iran desires to secure itself from nearby and external threats. In a regional arms race, such as the one among the Gulf states, all Arab countries may choose to seek out nuclear weapons to protect themselves. Thus, all the above facts make Iran a potential producer of nuclear weapons. However, it is important to note that in its efforts to produce them, Iran still faces substantial challenges, which will be expounded later in this chapter.

1. Possible Problems for Gulf States

Gulf states face the potential threat of violence exported from Iran reminiscent of the Arab Spring in 2011 and violent extremists like ISIS, the Houthies, as the al-Nusra Front and Hezbollah have risen. There is always the possibility that the United States will intervene to help the Gulf region to eliminate these groups. Any Iranian retaliation against U.S. attacks would lead to a regional war, undermining and threatening the security and stability of the entire region. War would create the possibility of an

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

overthrowing of the Arab Gulf governments or an expansion of the Iranian-Shiite theocratic model, which undermines the Arab identity. Iran crossing of the nuclear doorstep will impact the balance of power in an explosive and important region. In addition to political power, the Arab Gulf nations could face diminished economic positions and possibly radiation pollution.

2. Obstacles Hindering Gulf States from Confronting the Iranian Nuclear Project

There is a lack of political dialogue among Gulf states in persuading Iran to suspend its nuclear program. The Gulf states lack a clear, well-defined strategy or common procedure to secure the Arab Gulf region. The Gulf states are hesitant to gradually step up sanctions and are unable to achieve a variation of their income resources and maintain them to set up supplementary industries. Some of the Gulf states support Iran's right to acquire nuclear weapons, while others hesitate to support the strategy of both the United States and EU in denying Iran nuclear capabilities. The international arena has failed to declare the Gulf a region free of weapons of mass destruction. The Gulf states also have an inability to adopt a clear political posture to form strong economic relations with Iran. The fact that the Gulf states are trying to prevent any military confrontation with Iran is also hindering the general progress. Additionally, the Gulf states have failed to draw an Arab Gulf security policy that can deal with opposing security policies.

3. The Strategic Vision and the Corresponding Means to Confront the Iranian Nuclear Project

Gulf states like Saudi Arabia could try to achieve national security through the use or production of their own nuclear weapons to maintain a strategic balance with Iran. The Gulf states could implement international guarantees that restrict Iran to using its nuclear program solely for peaceful purposes. A well-balanced political dialogue between the Gulf states and Iran will help suspend Iran's nuclear weapons program. A true commitment by Iran to accept regular effective inspection of its nuclear installations will also help defend against the risks of the INP. The international community should urge

Iran to continue cooperating after the Vienna Declaration to prevent the manufacturing of nuclear weapons and to keep Iran's nuclear power peaceful. Efforts in various international arenas to free the Gulf region from any weapons of mass destruction could also help. The significant economic and political position of the Gulf states in general and Saudi Arabia in particular help the Gulf region maintain safety and security to face nuclear arms without any direct confrontation with Iran. The GCC should support the policies of both the United States and the EU to deny INP capabilities, which will certainly help minimize the risks.

4. Strategic Recommendations

In light of the outcome reached by this study, the researcher presents recommendations for the GCC. The first recommendation is the formation of a single, integrated GCC nuclear agency, charged with the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in the Gulf region. The researcher calls for an international conference to free the Gulf in particular and the Middle East in general from weapons of mass destruction, emphasizing that countries that possess nuclear installations or those in the process of developing such installations comply with the terms of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), including the periodic inspection of nuclear facilities. Capitalizing on the political and the economic power of the Gulf states will press Iran to review its nuclear program, or even restrict its use to peaceful purposes. To initiate the process, there must be direct dialogue between the GCC and Iran with the aim of explaining the risks of producing nuclear weapons, the risks of being attacked, and the risks of radiation polluting the whole Gulf region. The GCC must take the necessary measures to form an integrated single body able to confront the INP. The researcher recommends that the GCC elicit international public opinion in an effort to suspend the INP. Gulf states in conjunction with the international community must seek regional and international assurances that Iran shall not use its program for producing nuclear weapons.

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